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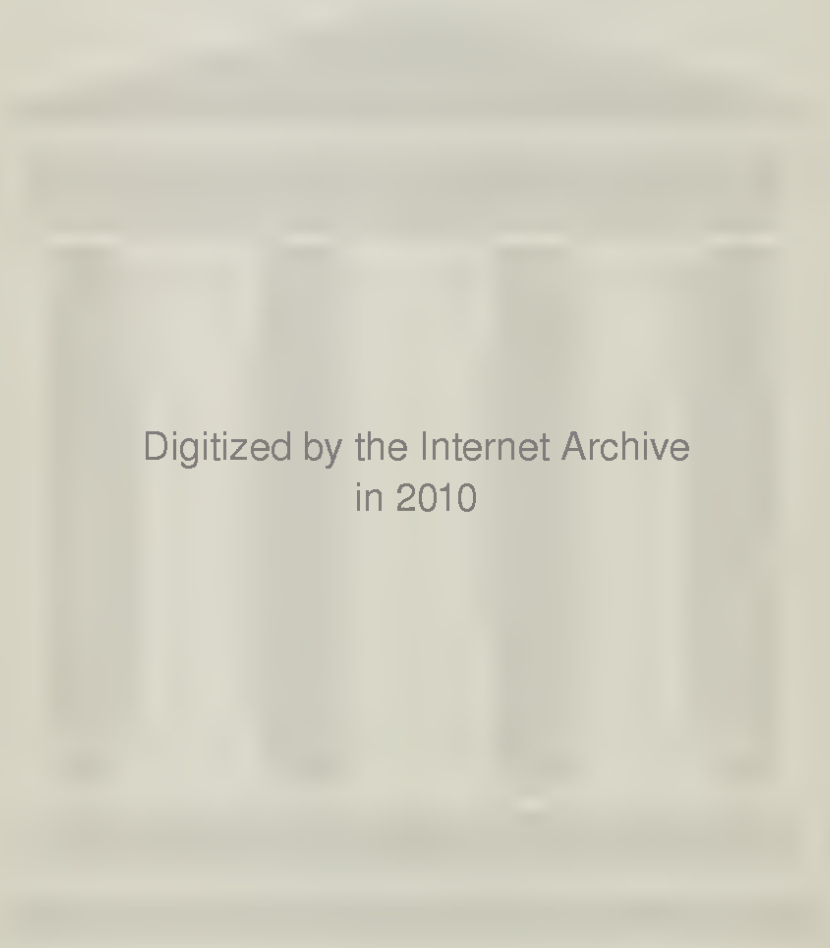
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Shorter Poems of Robert Browning

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SHORTER POEMS OF ROBERT BROWNING

Edited by Franklin T. Baker

Revised by H. Y. Moffett

Illustrated by Harry Townsend

The Macmillan Company

,50

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PREFACE

These selections from the poetry of Robert Browning have been made with especial reference to the tastes and capacities of readers of the high-school age. Every poem included has been found by experience to be within the grasp of boys and girls. Most of Browning's best poetry is within the ken of any reader of imagination and diligence. To the reader who lacks these, not only Browning, but the great world of literature, remains closed: Browning is not the only poet who requires close study. The difficulties he offers are, in his best poems, not more repellent to the thoughtful reader than the nut that protects and contains the kernel. To a boy or girl of active mind, the difficulty need rarely be more than a pleasant challenge to the exercise of a little patience and ingenuity.

Browning, when at his best in vigor, clearness, and beauty, is peculiarly a poet for young people. His freedom from sentimentality, his liveliness of conception and narration, his high optimism, and his interest in the things that

make for the life of the soul, appeal to the imagination and the feelings of youth.

The present edition attempts but little in the way of criticism. The notes cover such matters as are not readily settled by an appeal to the dictionary and suggest, in addition, questions that are designed to help in interpretation and appreciation.

F. T. B.

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✱ about death

✗ best poems in this book

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INTRODUCTION

Life of Browning

Robert Browning was born in Camberwell, London, May 7, 1812. He was contemporary with Tennyson, Dickens, Thackeray, Lowell, Emerson, Hawthorne, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Dumas, Hugo, Mendelssohn, Wagner, and a score of other men famous in art and science.

Browning's good fortune began with his birth. His father, a clerk in the Bank of England, possessed ample means for the education of his children. He had artistic and literary tastes, a mind richly stored with philosophy, history, literature, and legend, some repute as a maker of verses, and a liberality that led him to assist his gifted son in following his bent. From his father Robert inherited his literary tastes and his vigorous health; in his father he found a critic and companion. His mother was described by Carlyle as a type of the true Scotch gentlewoman. Her "fathomless charity," her love of music, and her deep religious feeling reappear in the poet.

Free from struggles with adversity and devoid of public or stirring incidents, the story of Browning's life is soon told. It was the life of a scholar and man of letters, devoted to the study of poetry, philosophy, history; to the contemplation of the lives of men and women; and to the exercise of his chosen vocation.

His school life was of meagre extent. He attended a private academy, read at home under a tutor, and for two years attended the University of London. When asked in his later life whether he had been to Oxford or Cambridge, he used to say, "Italy was my University." And, indeed, his many poems on Italian themes bear testimony to the profound influence of Italy upon him. In his teens, he came under the influence of Pope and Byron, and wrote verses after their styles. Then Shelley came by accident in his way and became to the boy the model of poetic excellence.

In 1833 appeared his first published poem, "Pauline." It bears the marks of his peculiar genius; it has the germs of his merits and his defects. Though not widely read, it received favorable notice from some of the critics. In 1835 appeared "Paracelsus"; in 1837, "Strafford"; in 1840, "Sordello." From this time on, for the fifty remaining years of his life, his poetic activity hardly ceased, though his poetry was of uneven excellence. The middle period of

his work, beginning with "Bells and Pomegranates" in 1842, and ending with "Balaustion's Adventure" (a transcript of Euripides' "Alcestis") in 1871, was by far the richest in poetic value.

In 1846 he married Elizabeth Barrett, the poet. They left England for Italy, where, because of Mrs. Browning's feeble health, they continued to reside until her death in 1861. The remainder of his life was divided between England and Italy, with frequent visits to southern France./His reputation as a poet had steadily grown. He was now one of the best-known men in England. His mental activity continued unabated to the end. Within the last thirty years of his life he wrote "The Ring and the Book"—his longest work, one of the longest and, intellectually, one of the greatest of English poems; translated the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus and the "Alcestis" of Euripides; published many shorter poems; kept up the studies which had always been his labor and his pastime; and found leisure also to know a wide circle of men and women. William Sharp gives a pleasing picture of the last years of his life: "Everybody wished him to come and dine; and he did his utmost to gratify Everybody. He saw everything; read all the notable books; kept himself acquainted with the leading contents of the journals and magazines; conducted

a large correspondence; read new French, German, and Italian books of mark; read and translated Euripides and Æschylus; knew all the gossip of the literary clubs, salons, and the studios; was a frequenter of afternoon tea-parties; and then, over and above it, he was Browning: the most profoundly subtle mind that has exercised itself in poetry since Shakespeare." [1]

He died in Venice, on December 12, 1889, and was buried in the poet's corner of Westminster Abbey.

BROWNING AS POET

The three generations of readers who have lived since Browning's first publication have seen as many attitudes taken toward one of the ablest poetic spirits of the century. To the first he appeared an enigma, a writer hopelessly obscure, perhaps not even clear in his own mind, as to the message he wished to deliver; to the second he appeared a prophet and a philosopher, full of all wisdom and subtlety, too deep for common mortals to fathom with line and plummet—concealing below green depths of ocean priceless gems of thought and feeling; to the third, a poet full of inequalities

[1] Sharp's *Life of Browning*.

in conception and expression, who has done many good things well and has made many grave failures.

No poet in our generation has fared so ill at the hands of the critics. Already the Browning library is large. Some of the criticism is good; much of it, regarding the author as philosopher and symbolist, is totally askew. Reams have been written in interpretation of "Childe Roland," an imaginative fantasy composed in one day. Abstruse ideas have been wrested from the simple story of "My Last Duchess." His poetry has been the stamping-ground of theologians and the centre of prattling literary circles. In this tortuous maze of futile criticism the one thing lost sight of is the fact that a poet must be judged by the standards of art. It must be confessed, however, that Browning is himself to blame for much of the smoke of commentary that has gathered round him. He has often chosen the oblique expression where the direct would serve better; often interpolated his own musing subtleties between the reader and the life he would present; often followed his theme into intricacies beyond his own power to resolve into the simple forms of art. Thus it has come about that misguided readers became enigma hunters, and the poet their Sphinx.

The real question with Browning, as with any poet, is, What is his work and worth as an

artist? What of human life that he presented, and how clear and true are his presentations? What passions, what struggles, what ideals, what activities of men has he added to the art world? What beauty and dignity, what light, has he created? How does he view life: with what of hope, or aspiration, or strength? These questions may be discussed under his sense and mastery of form, and under his views of human life.

Browning's sense of form has often been attacked and defended. The first impression upon reading him is of harshness amounting to the grotesque. Rhymes often clash and jangle like the music of savages. Such rhymes as

> Fancy the fabric . . .
> Ere mortar dab brick,

strain dignity and beauty to the breaking point. Archaic and bizarre words are pressed into service to help out the rhyme and metre; instead of melodic rhythm there are harsh and jolting combinations; until the reader brought up in the traditions of Shakespeare, Milton, and Tennyson is fain to cry out, This is not poetry!

In internal form as well, Browning often defies the established laws of literature. Distorted and elliptical sentences, long and irrele-

vant parentheses, curious involutions of thought, and irregular or incoherent development of the narrative or the picture, often leave the reader in despair of the meaning. Nor can these departures from orderly beauty always be defended by the exigencies of the subjects. They do not fit the theme. They are the discords of a musician who either has not mastered his instrument or is not sensitive to all the finer effects. Some of his work stands out clear from these faults: "A Toccata of Galuppi's," "Love among the Ruins," the Songs from "Pippa Passes," "Apparitions," "Andrea del Sarto," and a score of others might be cited to show that Browning could write with a sense of form as true, and an ear as delicate, as could any poet of the century, except Tennyson.

To Browning belongs the credit of having created a new poetic form—the dramatic monologue. In this form the larger number of his poems are cast. Among the best examples in this volume are "My Last Duchess," "The Bishop Orders His Tomb," "The Laboratory," and "Confessions." One person only is speaking, but reveals the presence, action, and thoughts of the others who are in the scene at the same time that he reveals his own character, as in a conversation in which but one voice is audible. The dramatic monologue has in a peculiar degree the advantages of compression

and vividness, and is, in Browning's hands, an instrument of great power.

The charge of obscurity so often made against Browning's poetry must in part be admitted. As has been said above, he is often led off by his many-sided interests into irrelevancies and subtleties that interfere with simplicity and beauty. His compressed style and his fondness for unusual words often make an unwarranted demand upon the reader's patience. Such passages are a challenge to his admirers and a repulse to the indifferent. Sometimes, indeed, the ore is not worth the smelting; often it yields enough to reward the greatest patience.

Browning, like all great poets, knew life widely and deeply through men and books. He was born in London, near the great centres of the intellectual movements of his time; he travelled much, especially in Italy and France; he read widely in the literatures and philosophies of many ages and many lands, and so grew into the cosmopolitanism of spirit that belonged to Chaucer and to Shakespeare.

In all art human life is the matter of ultimate interest. To Browning this was so in a peculiar degree. In the epistolary preface to "Sordello," written thirty years after its first publication, he said: "My stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul; little else is worth

study." This interest in "the development of a soul" is the keynote of nearly all his work. To it are directly traceable many of the most obvious excellences and defects of his poetry. He came to look below the surfaces of things for the soul beneath them. He came to be "the subtlest assertor of the Soul in Song," and like his own pair of lovers on the Campagna, "unashamed of soul." His early preference of Shelley to Keats indicated this bent. His readers are conscious always of revelations of the souls of the men and women he portrays: the sweet and tender womanhood of the Duchess, the sordid and material soul of the old Bishop of St. Praxed's, the devoted and heroic soul of Napoleon's young soldier, the weary and despairing soul of Andrea del Sarto—and a host of others stand before us cleared of the veil of habit and convention. The souls of men appear as the victors over all material and immaterial obstacles. Human affection transforms the bare room to a bower of fruits and flowers; human courage and resolution carry Childe Roland victoriously past the threats and terrors of malignant nature and the despair from accumulated memories of failure; death itself is described in "Evelyn Hope," in "Prospice," in "Rabbi Ben Ezra," as a phase, a transit of the soul, wherein the material aspects and the physical terrors disappear. In Browning's poetry,

the one real and permanent thing is the world of ideas, the world of the spirit. He is in this one of the truest Platonists of modern times.

To many young readers this method in art comes like a revelation. Other poets also portray the souls of men; but Browning does it more obviously, more intentionally, more insistently. It is well, therefore, to have read Browning. To learn to read him aright is to enter the gateway to other good and great poetry.

Out of this predominating interest in the souls of men, and out of his intense intellectual activity and scientific curiosity, grows one of Browning's greatest defects. He is often led too far afield, into intricacies and anomalies of character beyond the range of common experience and sympathy. The criminal, the "moral idiot," belong to the alienist rather than to the poet. The abnormalities of nature have no place in the world of great art; they do not echo the common experience of mankind. Already the interest is decreasing in that part of his poetry which deals with such themes. Bishop Blougram and Mr. Sludge will not take place in the ranks of artistic creations. Nor can the poet's "special pleading" for such types, however ingenious it may be, whatever philanthropy of soul it may imply, be regarded as justification. Sometimes, indeed, the poet is led by his sym-

pathy and his intellectual ingenuity into defences that are inconsistent with his own standards of the true and the beautiful.

The trait in Browning which appeals to the largest number of readers is his strenuous optimism. He will admit no evil or sorrow too great to be borne, too irrational to have some ultimate purpose of beneficence. "There shall never be one lost good," says Abt Vogler. The suicides in the morgue only serve to call forth his declaration:

> My own hope is, a sun will pierce
> The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
>
> * * * * * * * *
>
> That what began best can't end worst,
> Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst.

He has no fear of death; he will face it gladly, in confidence of the life beyond. His Grammarian is content to assume an order of things which will justify in the next life his ceaseless toil in this, merely to learn how to live. Rabbi Ben Ezra's old age is serene in the hope of the continuity of life and the eternal development of character; he finds life good, and the plan of things perfect. In brief, Browning accepts life as it is and believes it good, piecing out his conception of the goodness of life by drawing without limit upon his hopes of the other world.

With the exception of a few poems like "Andrea del Sarto," this is the unbroken tone of his poetry. Calvinism, asceticism, pessimism in any form, he rejects. He sustains his position not by argument, but by hope and assertion. It is a matter of temperament; he is optimistic because he was born so. Different from the serene optimism of Shakespeare's later life, in *The Tempest* and *A Winter's Tale*, in that it is not, like Shakespeare's, born of long and deep suffering from the contemplation of the tragedies of human life, it bears, in that degree, less of solace and conviction.

To Browning's temperament, also, may be ascribed another prominent trait in his work. He steadily asserts the right of the individual to live out his own life, to be himself in fulfilling his desires and aspirations. "The Statue and the Bust" is the famous exposition of this dictrine. It is a teaching that neither the poet's optimism nor his acumen has justified in the minds of men. It is a return to the unbridled freedom of nature advocated by Whitman and Rousseau; an extreme assertion of the value of the individual man and of unregulated democracy; an outgrowth, it may be, of the robustness and originality of Browning's nature, and interesting—not as a clew to his life, which conformed to that of organized society—but as a clew to his independence of classical and

conventional forms in the exercise of his art.

Creative energy Browning has in high degree. With the poet's insight into character and motives, the poet's grasp of the essential laws of human life, the poet's vividness of imagination, he has portrayed a host of types distinct from each other, true to life, strongly marked and consistent. With fine dramatic instinct he has shown these characters in true relation to the facts of life and to each other. In this respect he has satisfied the most exigent demands of art, and has already taken rank as one of the great creative minds of the nineteenth century.

True poet he is, also, in his depth of feeling and range of sympathy. Beneath a ruggedness of intellect, like his landscape in "De Gustibus," there is always sympathy and tenderness. It is, indeed, more like the serenity of Chaucer's emotions than like the tragic fervor of Shakespeare's. Mrs. Browning's estimate of him in "Lady Geraldine's Courtship—

> Or from Browning some "Pomegranate," which, if cut deep down the middle,
> Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity.

is true criticism.

His love of nature and his sense of the joy and beauty of it appear often in his poetry; but not with the same insistence as in Words-

worth and Burns, and seldom with the same pervasiveness, or with the same beauty, as in Tennyson. He was rather the poet of men's souls. When he does use nature, it is generally to illustrate some phase or experience of the soul, and not for the sake of its beauty. He has, however, some nature-descriptions so exquisite that English poetry would be poorer for their loss. Witness "De Gustibus," "Up at a Villa," "Home Thoughts from Abroad," Pippa's Songs, and "Saul."

It is too early to guess at Browning's permanent place in our literature. But his vigor of intellect, his insight into the human heart, his originality in phrase and conception, his unquenchable and fearless optimism, and his grasp of the problems of his century make him beyond question one of its greatest figures.

APPRECIATIONS

Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's,
Therefore, on him no speech! and brief for thee,
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale
No man has walked along our roads with step
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Tennyson has a vivid feeling of the dignity and potency of *law*. . . . Browning vividly feels the importance, the greatness, and beauty of passions and enthusiasms, and his imagination is comparatively unimpressed by the presence of law and its operations. . . . It is not the order and regularity in the processes of the natural world which chiefly delight Browning's imagination, but the streaming forth of power, and will, and love from the whole face of the visible universe. . . .

Tennyson considers the chief instruments of human progress to be a vast increase of knowledge and of political oganization. Browning makes that progress dependent on the production of higher passions, and aspirations—hopes, and joys, and sorrows; Tennyson finds the evidence of the truth of the doctrine of progress in the universal presence of a self-evolving law. Browning obtains his assurance of its truth from inward presages and prophecies of the soul, from anticipations, types, and symbols of a higher greatness in store for man, which even now reside within him, a creature ever unsatisfied, ever yearning upward in thought, feeling, and endeavour.

. . . Hence, it is not obedience, it is not submission to the law of duty, which points out to us our true path of life, but rather infinite desire and endless aspiration. Browning's ideal

of manhood in this world always recognizes the fact that it is the ideal of a creature who never can be perfected on earth, a creature whom other and higher lives await in an endless hereafter. . . .

The gleams of knowledge which we possess are of chief value because they "sting with hunger for full light." The goal of knowledge, as of love, is God himself. Its most precious part is that which is least positive—those momentary intuitions of things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard. The needs of the highest parts of our humanity cannot be supplied by ascertained truth, in which we might rest, or which we might put to use for definite ends; rather by ventures of faith, which test the courage of the soul, we ascend from surmise to assurance, and so again to higher surmise.—Condensed from EDWARD DOWDEN, *Studies in Literature*.

. . . Browning has not cared for that poetic form which bestows perennial charm, or else he was incapable of it. He fails in beauty, in concentration of interest, in economy of language, in selection of the best from the common treasure of experience. In those works where he has been most indifferent, as in the "Red Cotton Night-Cap Country," he has been merely whimsical and dull; in those works

where the genius he possessed is most felt, as in "Saul," "A Toccata of Galuppi's," "Rabbi Ben Ezra," "The Flight of the Duchess," "The Bishop Orders His Tomb in Saint Praxed's Church," "Hervé Riel," "Cavalier Tunes," "Time's Revenges," and many more, he achieves beauty, or nobility, or fitness of phrase such as only a poet is capable of. It is in these last pieces and their like that his fame lies for the future. It was his lot to be strong as the thinker, the moralist, with "the accomplishment of verse," the scholar interested to rebuild the past of experience, the teacher with an explicit dogma in an intellectual form with examples from life, the anatomist of human passions, instincts, and impulses in all their gamut, the commentator on his own age; he was weak as the artist, often unnecessarily and by choice, in the repulsive form—in the awkward, the obscure, the ugly. He belongs with Jonson, with Dryden, with the heirs of the masculine intellect, the men of power not unvisited by grace, but in whom mind is predominant. Upon the work of such poets time hesitates, conscious of their mental greatness, but also of their imperfect art, their heterogeneous matter; at last the good is sifted from that whence worth has departed. —From GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY, *Studies in Letters and Life.*

When it is urged that for a poet the intellec-

tual energies are too strong in Browning, that for poetry the play of intellectual interests and activities is too great in his work, and that Browning often and at times ruthlessly sacrifices the requirements and effects of art for the expression of thought, that "though he refreshes the heart, he tires the brain," we should admit this with regard to a good deal of the work of the third period. We should allow that this is the side to which he leans generally, but still hold that, though to many his intellectual quality and energy may well seem excessive, yet in great part of his work, and that of course, his best, the passion of the poet and his kind of imagination are just as fresh and powerful as the intellectual force and subtlety are keen and abundant.—JAMES FOTHERINGHAM, *Studies of the Mind and Art of Robert Browning.*

Now dumb is he who waked the world to speak,
And voiceless hangs the world beside his bier,
Our words are sobs, our cry or praise a tear:
We are the smitten mortal, we the weak.
We see a spirit on earth's loftiest peak
Shine, and wing hence the way he makes more clear:
See a great Tree of Life that never sere
Dropped leaf for aught that age or storms might wreak;
Such ending is not death: such living shows
What wide illumination brightness sheds
From one big heart,—to conquer man's old foes:

The coward, and the tyrant, and the force
Of all those weedy monsters raising heads
When Song is much from springs of turbid source.

—GEORGE MEREDITH.

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BROWNING'S SHORTER POEMS

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

A Child's Story

(Written for, and inscribed to W. M. the Younger)

I

Hamelin° Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

II

Rats!
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,

And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
" 'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, sirs! give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV

An hour they sat in council;
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell

I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber-door but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little, though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle, green and glutinous)
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

V

"Come in!"—the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red,
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in;

There was no guessing his kith and kin:
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: "It's as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

VI

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please your honors," said he, "I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep or swim or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and toad and newt and viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper."
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same cheque;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,

In Tartary I freed the Cham,°
Last June, from his huge swarm of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam°
Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats:
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One? fifty thousand!"— was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came
tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,

Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
  Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step by step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,
Wherein all plunged and perished!
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary:
Which was: "At the first shrill notes of the
    pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe:
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, 'Oh, rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!'
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
Already staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,

Just as methought it said, 'Come, bore me!'
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles,
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

IX

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation, too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret,° Moselle,° Vin-de-Grave,° Hock°;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.°
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink

"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait! Beside,
I've promised to visit by dinner-time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's° kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor:
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion."

XI

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I brook
Being worse treated than a Cook?

Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst!
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

XII

Once more he stept into the street,
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet,
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling;
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,
—Could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However, he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern were suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced, and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame

His sadness, he was used to say,—
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings:
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

XIV

Alas, alas for Hamelin!
There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says that heaven's gate
Opes to the rich at as easy a rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!

The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
  Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
  And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavor,
And Piper and dancers were gone forever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
  Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
  "And so long after what happened here
  On the Twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six."
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
  To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
  They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church-window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away,
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe

Of alien people who ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

XV

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers!
And whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise!

TRAY

SING me a hero! Quench my thirst
Of soul, ye bards!
Quoth Bard the first:
"Sir Olaf,° the good knight, did don
His helm and eke his habergeon . . ."
Sir Olaf and his bard——!

"That sin-scathed brow"° (quoth Bard the second)
"That eye wide ope as tho' Fate beckoned

My hero to some steep, beneath
Which precipice smiled tempting Death . . . "
You too without your host have reckoned!

"A beggar-child" (let's hear this third!)
"Sat on a quay's edge: like a bird
Sang to herself at careless play,
And fell into the stream. 'Dismay!
Help, you the standers-by!' None stirred.

"Bystanders reason, think of wives
And children ere they risk their lives.
Over the balustrade has bounced
A mere instinctive dog, and pounced
Plumb on the prize. 'How well he dives!

" 'Up he comes with the child, see, tight
In mouth, alive too, clutched from quite
A depth of ten feet—twelve, I bet!
Good dog! What, off again? There's yet
Another child to save? All right!

" 'How strange we saw no other fall!
It's instinct in the animal.
Good dog! But he's a long while under:
If he got drowned I should not wonder—
Strong current, that against the wall!

" 'Here he comes, holds in mouth this time
—What may the thing be? Well, that's prime!

Now, did you ever? Reason reigns
In man alone, since all Tray's pains
Have fished—the child's doll from the slime!'

"And so, amid the laughter gay,
Trotted my hero off,—old Tray,—
Till somebody, prerogatived
With reason, reasoned: 'Why he dived,
His brain would show us, I should say.

" 'John, go and catch—or, if needs be,
Purchase—that animal for me!
By vivisection, at expense
Of half-an-hour and eighteen pence,
How brain secretes dog's soul, we'll see!' "

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon°:
A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall,

Let once my army-leader Lannes°
  Waver at yonder wall,"—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
  A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
  Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
  And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
  You hardly could suspect°—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
  Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
  Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace
  We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
  And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird° flap his vans
  Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans
  Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
  Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
  When her bruised eaglet breathes;

"You're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX"

[16—]

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern,° the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girth's tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,

Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren,° the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom,° a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld,° 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln° church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aershot,° up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;

And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,

And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is—friends flocking round

As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

HERVÉ RIEL

I

On the sea and at the Hogue,° sixteen hundred ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French,—woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to St. Malo on the Rance,°
With the English fleet in view.

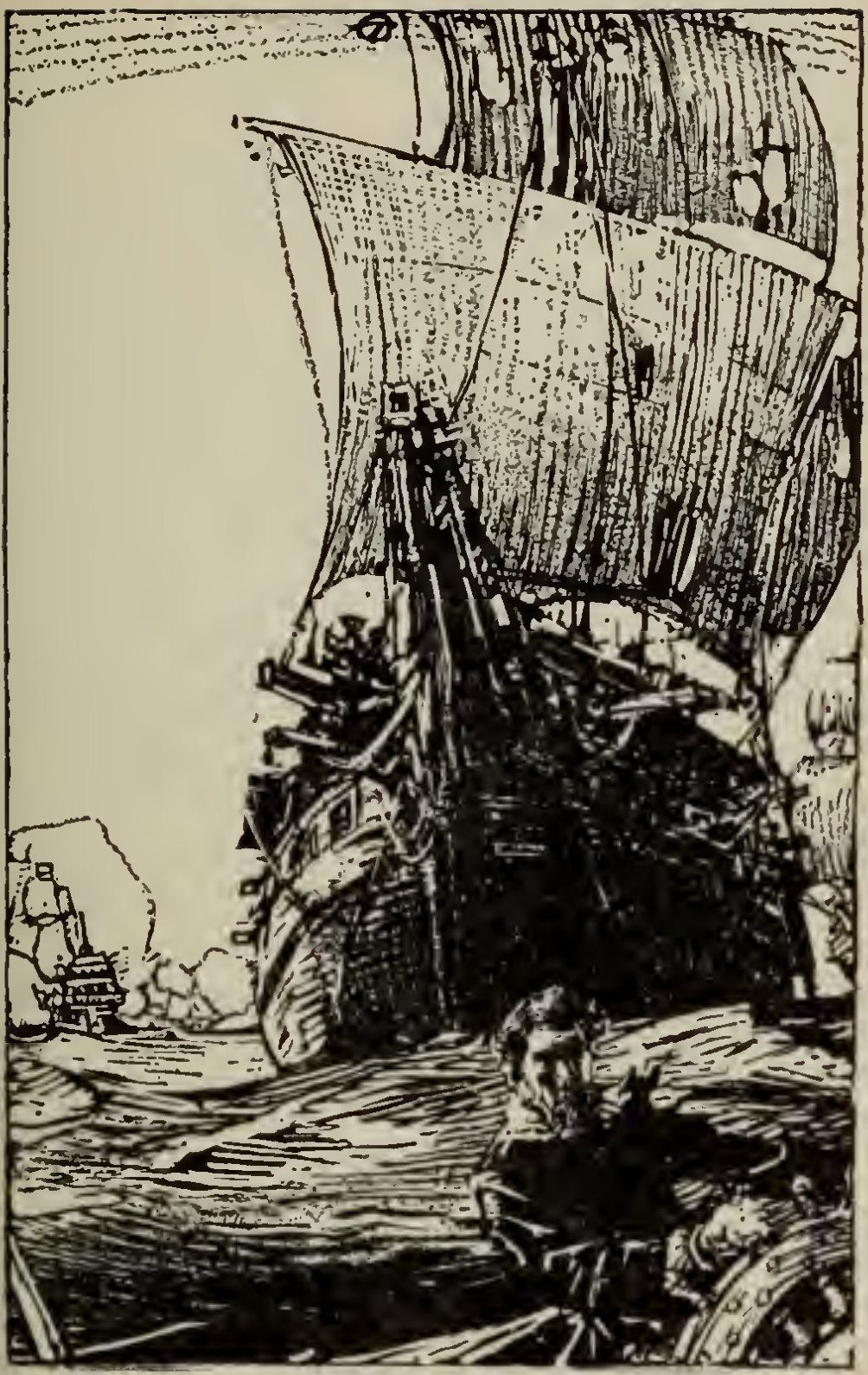
II

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;

First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfreville;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signalled to the place
"Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbor, take us quick—or, quicker still,
Here's the English can and will!"

III

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board;
"Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?" laughed they:
"Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and scored,
Shall the "Formidable" here, with her twelve and eighty guns
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,
And with flow at full beside?
Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!"



HERVÉ RIEL

IV

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
"Here's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow
All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?
Better run the ships aground!"
(Ended Damfreville his speech.)
"Not a minute more to wait!
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

V

"Give the word!" But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
—A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor pressed° by Tourville for the fleet,

A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.°

VI

And "What mockery or malice have we here?" cries Hervé Riel:
"Are you mad, you Malouins°? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell
'Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river disembogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.°
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this "Formidable" clear,
Make the others follow mine,

And I lead them, most and least, by a passage
I know well,
Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound;
And if one ship misbehave,
—Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why, I've nothing but my life,—here's my head!" cries Hervé Riel.

VII

Not a minute more to wait.
"Steer us in, then, small and great!
Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place!
He is Admiral, in brief.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's profound!
See, safe through shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock,
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,
Not a spar that comes to grief!
The peril, see, is past,

All are harbored to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor!"—sure as fate,
Up the English come—too late!

VIII

So, the storm subsides to calm.
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanched with balm.
"Just our rapture to enhance,
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance
As they cannonade away!
'Neath rampired° Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!"
How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance!
Out burst all with one accord,
"This is Paradise for Hell!
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing!"
What a shout, and all one word,
"Hervé Riel!"
As he stepped in front once more,
Not a symptom of surprise
In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

IX

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
  Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips:
You have saved the King his ships,
  You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse!
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's
  not Damfreville."

X

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue:
"Since I needs must say my say,
  Since on board the duty's done,
  And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what
    is it but a run?—
Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
Since the others go ashore—
Come! A good whole holiday!
  Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call
    the Belle Aurore!"
That he asked and that he got,—nothing more.

XI

Name and deed alike are lost:
Not a pillar nor a post
In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing-smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack
All that France saved from the fight whence England bore the bell.
Go to Paris: rank on rank
Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre,° face and flank!
You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honor France, love thy wife the Belle Aurore!

MARTIN RELPH

My grandfather says he remembers he saw, when a youngster long ago,
On a bright May day, a strange old man, with a beard as white as snow,

Stand on the hill outside our town like a monument of woe,
And, striking his bare bald head the while, sob out the reason—so!

If I last as long as Methusaleh° I shall never forgive myself:
But—God forgive me, that I pray, unhappy Martin Relph,
As coward, coward I call him—him, yes, him! Away from me!
Get you behind the man I am now, you man that I used to be!

What can have sewed my mouth up, set me a-stare, all eyes, no tongue?
People have urged "You visit a scare too hard on a lad so young!
You were taken aback, poor boy," they urge, "no time to regain your wits:
Besides it had maybe cost you life." Ay, there is the cap which fits!

So, cap me, the coward,—thus! No fear! A cuff on the brow does good:
The feel of it hinders a worm inside which bores at the brain for food.
See now, there certainly seems excuse: for a moment, I trust, dear friends,
The fault was but folly, no fault of mine, or if mine, I have made amends!

For, every day that is first of May, on the hill-top, here stand I,
Martin Relph, and I strike my brow, and publish the reason why,
When there gathers a crowd to mock the fool. No fool, friends, since the bite
Of a worm inside is worse to bear: pray God I have baulked him quite!

I'll tell you. Certainly much excuse! It came of the way they cooped
Us peasantry up in a ring just here, close huddling because tight-hooped
By the red-coats round us villagers all: they meant we should see the sight
And take the example,—see, not speak, for speech was the Captain's right.

"You clowns on the slope, beware!" cried he: "This woman about to die
Gives by her fate fair warning to such acquaintance as play the spy.
Henceforth who meddle with matters of state above them perhaps will learn
That peasants should stick to their plough-tail, leave to the King the King's concern.

"Here's a quarrel that sets the land on fire, between King George and his foes:

What call has a man of your kind—much less,
a woman—to interpose?
Yet you needs must be meddling, folk like you,
not foes—so much the worse!
The many and loyal should keep themselves
unmixed with the few perverse.

"Is the counsel hard to follow? I gave it you
plainly a month ago,
And where was the good? The rebels have
learned just all that they need to know.
Not a month since in we quietly marched: a
week, and they had the news,
From a list complete of our rank and file to a
note of our caps and shoes.

"All about all we did and all we were doing and
like to do!
Only, I catch a letter by luck, and capture who
wrote it, too.
Some of you men look black enough, but the
milk-white face demure
Betokens the finger foul with ink: 'tis a woman
who writes, be sure!

"Is it 'Dearie, how much I miss your mouth!'
—good natural stuff, she pens?
Some sprinkle of that, for a blind, of course:
with talk about cocks and hens,

How 'robin has built on the apple-tree, and our
creeper which came to grief
Through the frost, we feared, is twining afresh
round casement in famous leaf.'

"But all for a blind! She soon glides frank into
'Horrid the place is grown
With Officers here and Privates there, no nook
we may call our own:
And Farmer Giles has a tribe to house, and
lodging will be to seek
For the second Company sure to come ('tis
whispered) on Monday week.'

"And so to the end of the chapter! There! The
murder, you see, was out:
Easy to guess how the change of mind in the
rebels was brought about!
Safe in the trap would they now lie snug, had
treachery made no sign:
But treachery meets a just reward, no matter if
fools malign!

"That traitors had played us false, was proved
—sent news which fell so pat:
And the murder was out—this letter of love,
the sender of this sent that!
'Tis an ugly job, though, all the same—a hate-
ful, to have to deal

With a case of the kind, when a woman's in
fault: we soldiers need nerves of steel!

"So, I gave her a chance, dispatched post-haste
a message to Vincent Parkes
Whom she wrote to; easy to find he was, since
one of the King's own clerks,
Ay, kept by the King's own gold in the town
close by where the rebels camp:
A sort of a lawyer, just the man to betray our
sort—the scamp!

" 'If her writing is simple and honest and only
the lover-like stuff it looks,
And if you yourself are a loyalist, nor down in
the rebels' books,
Come quick,' said I, 'and in person prove you
are each of you clear of crime,
Or martial law must take its course: this day
next week's the time!'

"Next week is now: does he come? Not he!
Clean gone, our clerk, in a trice!
He has left his sweetheart here in the lurch: no
need of a warning twice!
His own neck free, but his partner's fast in the
noose still, here she stands
To pay for her fault. 'Tis an ugly job: but sol-
diers obey commands.

"And hearken wherefore I make a speech!
Should any acquaintance share
The folly that led to the fault that is now to be
punished, let fools beware!
Look black, if you please, but keep hands
white: and, above all else, keep wives—
Or sweethearts or what they may be—from
ink! Not a word now, on your lives!"

Black? but the Pit's own pitch was white to
the Captain's face—the brute
With the bloated cheeks and the bulgy nose and
the bloodshot eyes to suit!
He was muddled with wine, they say: more
like, he was out of his wits with fear;
He had but a handful of men, that's true,—a
riot might cost him dear.

And all that time stood Rosamund Page, with
pinioned arms and face
Bandaged about, on the turf marked out for
the party's firing-place.
I hope she was wholly with God: I hope 'twas
His angel stretched a hand
To steady her so, like the shape of stone you
see in our church-aisle stand.

I hope there was no vain fancy pierced the
bandage to vex her eyes,

No face within which she missed without, no
questions and no replies—
"Why did you leave me to die?"—"Because
. . ." Oh, fiends, too soon you grin
At merely a moment of hell, like that—such
heaven as hell ended in!

Let mine end too! He gave the word, up went
the guns in a line.
Those heaped on the hill were blind as dumb,—
for, of all eyes, only mine
Looked over the heads of the foremost rank.
Some fell on their knees in prayer,
Some sank to the earth, but all shut eyes, with
a sole exception there.

That was myself, who had stolen up last, Had
sidled behind the group:
I am highest of all on the hill-top, there stand
fixed while the others stoop!
From head to foot in a serpent's twine am I
tightened: *I* touch ground?
No more than a gibbet's rigid corpse which the
fetters rust around!

Can I speak, can I breathe, can I burst—aught
else but see, see, only see?
And see I do—for there comes in sight—a man,
it sure must be!—

Who staggeringly, stumblingly rises, falls, rises,
at random flings his weight
On and on, anyhow onward—a man that's mad
he arrives too late!

Else why does he wave a something white high-
flourished above his head?
Why does not he call, cry,—curse the fool!—
why throw up his arms instead?
O take this fist in your own face, fool! Why
does not yourself shout "Stay!
Here's a man comes rushing, might and main,
with something he's mad to say"?

And a minute, only a moment, to have hell-fire
boil up in your brain,
And ere you can judge things right, choose
heaven,—time's over, repentance vain!
They level: a volley, a smoke and the clearing
of smoke: I see no more
Of the man smoke hid, nor his frantic arms,
nor the something white he bore.

But stretched on the field, some half-mile off,
is an object. Surely dumb,
Deaf, blind were we struck, that nobody heard,
not one of us saw him come!
Has he fainted through fright? One may well
believe! What is it he holds so fast?

Turn him over, examine the face! Hey-day!
What, Vincent Parkes at last?

Dead! dead as she, by the self-same shot: one
bullet has ended both,
Her in the body and him in the soul. They
laugh at our plighted troth.
"Till death us do part?" Till death us do join
past parting—that sounds like
Betrothal indeed! O Vincent Parkes, what
need has my fist to strike?

I helped you: thus were you dead and wed: one
bound, and your soul reached hers!
There is clenched in your hand the thing,
signed, sealed, the paper which plain avers
She is innocent, innocent, plain as print, with
the King's Arms broad engraved:
No one can hear, but if anyone high on the hill
can see, she's saved!

And torn his garb and bloody his lips with
heart-break—plain it grew
How the week's delay had been brought about:
each guess at the end proved true.
It was hard to get at the folk in power: such
waste of time! and then
Such pleading and praying, with, all the while,
his lamb in the lions' den!

And at length when he wrung their pardon out, no end to the stupid forms—
The licence and leave: I make no doubt—what wonder if passion warms
The pulse in a man if you play with his heart? —he was something hasty in speech;
Anyhow, none would quicken the work: he had to beseech, beseech!

And the thing once signed, sealed, safe in his grasp,—what followed but fresh delays?
For the floods were out, he was forced to take such a roundabout of ways!
And 'twas "Halt there!" at every turn of the road, since he had to cross the thick
Of the red-coats: what did they care for him and his "Quick, for God's sake, quick!"

Horse? but he had one: had it how long? till the first knave smirked "You brag
Yourself a friend of the King's? then lend to a King's friend here your nag!"
Money to buy another? Why, piece by piece they plundered him still,
With their "Wait you must,—no help: if aught can help you, a guinea will!"

And a borough there was—I forget the name—whose Mayor must have the bench

Of Justices ranged to clear a doubt: for "Vincent," thinks he, sounds French!
It well may have driven him daft, God knows! all man can certainly know
Is—rushing and falling and rising, at last he arrived in a horror—so!

When a word, cry, gasp, would have rescued both! Ay bite me! The worm begins
At his work once more. Had cowardice proved —that only—my sin of sins!
Friends, look you here! Suppose . . . suppose . . . But mad I am, needs must be!
Judas the Damned would never have dared such a sin as I dream! For, see!

Suppose I had sneakingly loved her myself, my wretched self, and dreamed
In the heart of me "She were better dead than happy and his!"—while gleamed
A light from hell as I spied the pair in a perfectest embrace,
He the saviour and she the saved,—bliss born of the very murder-place!

No! Say I was scared, friends! Call me fool and coward, but nothing worse!
Jeer at the fool and gibe at the coward! 'Twas ever the coward's curse

That fear breeds fancies in such: such take
their shadow for substance still,
—A fiend at their back. I liked poor Parkes,—
loved Vincent, if you will!

And her—why, I said "Good morrow" to her
"Good even," and nothing more:
The neighbourly way! She was just to me as
fifty had been before.
So, coward it is and coward shall be! There's a
friend, now! Thanks! A drink
Of water I wanted: and now I can walk, get
home by myself, I think.

PHEIDIPPIDES

χαίρετε, νικῶμεν°

FIRST I salute this soil of the blessed, river
and rock!
Gods of my birthplace, dæmons and heroes,
honor to all!
Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron,
co-equal in praise
—Ay, with Zeus° the Defender, with Her° of
the ægis and spear!
Also, ye of the bow and the buskin,° praised
be your peer,
Now, henceforth and forever,—O latest to
whom I upraise
Hand and heart and voice! For Athens, leave
pasture and flock!

Present to help, potent to save, Pan°—patron
I call!

Archons° of Athens, topped by the tettix,° see,
I return!
See, 'tis myself here standing alive, no spectre
that speaks!
Crowned with the myrtle, did you command
me, Athens and you,
"Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach
Sparta for aid!
Persia has come, we are here, where is She?"
Your command I obeyed,
Ran and raced: like stubble, some field which
a fire runs through,
Was the space between city and city: two days,
two nights did I burn°
Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and
up peaks.

Into their midst I broke: breath served but for
"Persia has come!
Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute,
water and earth°;
Razed to the ground is Eretria°—but Athens,
shall Athens sink,
Drop into dust and die—the flower of Hellas
utterly die,
Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta,
the stupid, the stander-by?

Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you
stretch o'er destruction's brink?
How,—when? No care for my limbs!—there's
lightning in all and some—
Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips
give it birth!"

O my Athens—Sparta love thee? Did Sparta
respond?
Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy,
mistrust,
Malice,—each eye of her gave me its glitter of
gratified hate!
Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast
for excuses. I stood
Quivering,—the limbs of me fretting as fire
frets, an inch from dry wood:
"Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still
they debate?
Thunder, thou Zeus! Athene, are Spartans a
quarry beyond
Swing of thy spear? Phoibus° and Artemis,°
clang them 'Ye must'!"

No bolt launched from Olumpos°! Lo, their
answer at last!
"Has Persia come,—does Athens ask aid,—
may Sparta befriend?
Nowise precipitate judgment—too weighty the
issue at stake!

Count we no time lost time which lags through respect to the Gods!
Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare, whatever the odds
In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take
Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already she rounds to it fast.
Athens must wait, patient as we—who judgment suspend."

Athens,—except for that sparkle,—thy name, I had mouldered to ash!
That sent a blaze through my blood; off, off and away was I back,
—Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false and the vile!
Yet "O gods of my land!" I cried, as each hillock and plain,
Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them again,
"Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we paid you erewhile?
Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome libation! Too rash
Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!

"Oak and olive and bay,—I bid you cease to enwreathe

Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian's foot,
You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn a slave!
Rather I hail thee, Parnes,°—trust to thy wild waste tract!
Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What matter if slacked
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave
No deity deigns to drape with verdure? at least I can breathe,
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute!"

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge;
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a bar
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.
Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure across:
"Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night in the fosse?
Athens to aid? Though the dive were through Erebos,° thus I obey—
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise! No bridge
Better!"—when—ha! what was it I came on, of wonders that are?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he—majestical Pan!
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his hoof:
All the great God was good in the eyes grave-kindly—the curl
Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's awe,
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I saw.
"Halt, Pheidippides!"—halt I did, my brain of a whirl:
"Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?" he gracious began:
"How is it,—Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof?

"Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no feast!
Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more helpful of old?
Ay, and still, and forever her friend! Test Pan, trust me!
Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have faith
In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens, 'The Goat-God saith:
When Persia—so much as strews not the soil —is cast in the sea,

Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your most and least,
Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the free and the bold!'

"Say Pan saith: 'Let this, foreshowing the place,° be the pledge!' "
(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear
—Fennel—I grasped it a-tremble with dew —whatever it bode)
"While, as for thee . . ." But enough! He was gone. If I ran hitherto—
Be sure that, the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but flew.
Parnes to Athens—earth no more, the air was my road:
Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor's edge!
Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon rare!

Then spoke Miltiades.° "And thee, best runner of Greece,
Whose limbs did duty indeed,—what gift is promised thyself?
Tell it us straightway,—Athens the mother demands of her son!"
Rosily blushed the youth: he paused: but, lifting at length

His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength
Into the utterance—"Pan spoke thus: 'For what thou hast done
Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee release
From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf!'

"I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind!
Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may grow,—
Pound—Pan helping us—Persia to dust, and, under the deep,
Whelm her away forever; and then,—no Athens to save,—
Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave,—
Hie to my house and home: and, when my children shall creep
Close to my knees,—recount how the God was awful yet kind,
Promised their sire reward to the full—rewarding him—so!"

Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day:
So, when Persia was dust, all cried "To Akropolis°!

Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!
'Athens is saved, thank Pan,' go shout!" He flung down his shield,
Ran like fire once more: and the space 'twixt the Fennel-field
And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through,
Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we conquer!" Like wine through clay,
Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died—the bliss!

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute
Is still "Rejoice!"—his word which brought rejoicing indeed.
So is Pheidippides happy forever,—the noble strong man
Who could race like a god, bear the face of a god, whom a god loved so well;
He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell
Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,
So to end gloriously—once to shout, thereafter be mute:
"Athens is saved!"—Pheidippides dies in the shout for his meed.

IVÀN IVÀNOVITCH

"THEY tell me, your carpenters," quoth I to my friend the Russ,
"Make a simple hatchet serve as a toolbox serves with us.
Arm but each man with his axe, 'tis a hammer and saw and plane
And chisel, and—what know I else? We should imitate in vain
The mastery wherewithal, by a flourish of just the adze,
He cleaves, clamps, dovetails in,—no need of our nails and brads,—
The manageable pine: 'tis said he could shave himself
With the axe,—so all adroit, now a giant and now an elf,
Does he work and play at once!"
Quoth my friend the Russ to me.
"Ay, that and more beside on occasion! It scarce may be
You never heard tell a tale told children, time out of mind,
By father and mother and nurse, for a moral that's behind,
Which children quickly seize. If the incident happened at all,
We place it in Peter's time when hearts were great not small,

Germanised, Frenchified. I wager 'tis old to you
As the story of Adam and Eve, and possibly quite as true."

In the deep of our land, 'tis said, a village from out the woods
Emerged on the great main-road 'twixt two great solitudes.
Through forestry right and left, black verst° and verst of pine,
From village to village runs the road's long wide bare line.
Clearance and clearance break the else-unconquered growth
Of pine and all that breeds and broods there, leaving loth
Man's inch of masterdom,—spot of life, spirt of fire,—
To star the dark and dread, lest right and rule expire
Throughout the monstrous wild, a-hungered to resume
Its ancient sway, suck back the world into its womb:
Defrauded by man's craft which clove from North to South
This highway broad and straight e'en from the Neva's° mouth

To Moscow's gates of gold. So, spot of life and spirt
Of fire aforesaid, burn, each village death-begirt
By wall and wall of pine—unprobed undreamed abyss.

Early one winter morn, in such a village as this,
Snow-whitened everywhere except the middle road
Ice-roughed by track of sledge, there worked by his abode
Ivàn Ivànovitch, the carpenter, employed
On a huge shipmast trunk; his axe now trimmed and toyed
With branch and twig, and now some chop athwart the bole
Changed bole to billets, bared at once the sap and soul.
About him, watched the work his neighbours sheepskin-clad;
Each bearded mouth puffed steam, each grey eye twinkled glad
To see the sturdy arm which, never stopping play,
Proved strong man's blood still boils, freeze winter as he may.
Sudden, a burst of bells. Out of the road, on edge
Of the hamlet—horse's hoofs galloping. "How, a sledge?

What's here?" cried all as—in, up to the open space,
Workyard and market-ground, folk's common meeting-place,—
Stumbled on, till he fell, in one last bound for life,
A horse: and, at his heels, a sledge held—"Dmìtri's wife!
Back without Dmìtri too! and children—where are they?
Only a frozen corpse!"

They drew it forth: then—"Nay,
Not dead, though like to die! Gone hence a month ago:
Home again, this rough jaunt—alone through night and snow—
What can the cause be? Hark—Droug,° old horse, how he groans:
His day's done! Chafe away, keep chafing, for she moans:
She's coming to! Give here: see, motherkin, your friends!
Cheer up, all safe at home! Warm inside makes amends
For outside cold,—sup quick! Don't look as we were bears!
What is it startles you? What strange adventure stares

Up at us in your face? You know friends—
which is which?
I'm Vàssili, he's Sergeì, Ivàn Ivànovitch . . ."

At the word, the woman's eyes, slow-wandering
till they neared
The blue eyes o'er the bush of honey-coloured
beard,
Took in full light and sense and—torn to rags,
some dream
Which hid the naked truth—O loud and long
the scream
She gave, as if all power of voice within her
throat
Poured itself wild away to waste in one dread
note!
Then followed gasps and sobs, and then the
steady flow
Of kindly tears: the brain was saved, a man
might know.
Down fell her face upon the good friend's prop-
ping knee;
His broad hands smoothed her head, as fain
to brush it free
From fancies, swarms that stung like bees un-
hived. He soothed—
"Loukèria, Loùscha!"—still he, fondling,
smoothed and smoothed.
At last her lips formed speech.

"Ivàn, dear—you indeed!
You, just the same dear you! While I . . . O intercede,
Sweet Mother, with thy Son Almighty—let his might
Bring yesterday once more, undo all done last night!
But this time yesterday, Ivàn, I sat like you,
A child on either knee, and, dearer than the two,
A babe inside my arms, close to my heart—that's lost
In morsels o'er the snow! Father, Son, Holy Ghost,
Cannot you bring again my blessed yesterday?"

When no more tears would flow, she told her tale: this way.

"Maybe, a month ago,—was it not?—news came here,
They wanted, deeper down, good workmen fit to rear
A church and roof it in. 'We'll go,' my husband said:
'None understands like me to melt and mould their lead.'
So, friends here helped us off—Ivàn, dear, you the first!

How gay we jingled forth, all five—(my heart will burst)—
While Dmìtri shook the reins, urged Droug upon his track!

"Well, soon the month ran out, we just were coming back,
When yesterday—behold, the village was on fire!
Fire ran from house to house. What help, as, nigh and nigher,
The flames came furious? 'Haste,' cried Dmìtri, 'men must do
The little good man may: to sledge and in with you,
You and our three! We check the fire by laying flat
Each building in its path,—I needs must stay for that,—
But you . . . no time for talk! Wrap round you every rug,
Cover the couple close,—you'll have the babe to hug.
No care to guide old Droug, he knows his way, by guess,
Once start him on the road: but chirrup, none the less!
The snow lies glib as glass and hard as steel, and soon

You'll have rise, fine and full, a marvel of a moon.
Hold straight up, all the same, this lighted twist of pitch!
Once home and with our friend Ivàn Ivànovitch,
All's safe: I have my pay in pouch, all's right with me,
So I but find as safe you and our precious three!
Off, Droug!'—because the flames had reached us, and the men
Shouted 'But lend a hand, Dmìtri—as good as ten!'

"So, in we bundled—I, and those God gave me once;
Old Droug, that's stiff at first, seemed youthful for the nonce:
He understood the case, galloping straight ahead.
Out came the moon: my twist soon dwindled, feebly red
In that unnatural day—yes, daylight, bred between
Moon-light and snow-light, lamped those grotto-depths which screen
Such devils from God's eye. Ah, pines, how straight you grow

Nor bend one pitying branch, true breed of brutal snow!
Some undergrowth had served to keep the devils blind
While we escaped outside their border!

"Was that—wind?
Anyhow, Droug starts, stops, back go his ears, he snuffs,
Snorts,—never such a snort! then plunges, knows the sough's
Only the wind: yet, no—our breath goes up too straight!
Still the low sound,—less low, loud, louder, at a rate
There's no mistaking more! Shall I lean out—look—learn
The truth whatever it be? Pad, pad! At last I turn—

" 'Tis the regular pad of the wolves in pursuit of the life in the sledge!
An army they are: close-packed they press like the thrust of a wedge:
They increase as they hunt: for I see, through the pine-trunks ranged each side,
Slip forth new fiend and fiend, make wider and still more wide
The four-footed steady advance. The foremost —none may pass:

They are elders and lead the line, eye and eye
—green-glowing brass!
But a long way distant still. Droug, save us!
He does his best:
Yet they gain on us, gain, till they reach,—
one reaches . . . How utter the rest?
O that Satan-faced first of the band! How he
lolls out the length of his tongue,
How he laughs and lets gleam his white teeth!
He is on me, his paws pry among
The wraps and the rugs! O my pair, my twin-
pigeons, lie still and seem dead!
Stepàn, he shall never have you for a meal,—
here's your mother instead!
No, he will not be counselled—must cry, poor
Stiòpka,° so foolish! though first
Of my boy-brood, he was not the best: nay,
neighbours have called him the worst:
He was puny, an undersized slip,—a darling to
me, all the same!
But little there was to be praised in the boy,
and a plenty to blame.
I loved him with heart and soul, yes—but, deal
him a blow for a fault,
He would sulk for whole days. 'Foolish boy! lie
still or the villain will vault,
Will snatch you from over my head! No use!
he cries, screams,—who can hold
Fast a boy in a frenzy of fear! It follows—as I
foretold!

The Satan-face snatched and snapped: I tugged, I tore—and then
His brother too needs must shriek! If one must go, 'tis men
The Tsar needs, so we hear, not ailing boys! Perhaps
My hands relaxed their grasp, got tangled in the wraps:
God, he was gone! I looked: there tumbled the cursed crew,
Each fighting for a share: too busy to pursue!
That's so far gain at least: Droug, gallop another verst
Or two, or three—God sends we beat them, arrive the first!
A mother who boasts two boys was ever accounted rich:
Some have not a boy: some have, but lose him, —God knows which
Is worse: how pitiful to see your weakling pine
And pale and pass away! Strong brats, this pair of mine!

"O misery! for while I settle to what near seems
Content, I am 'ware again of the tramp, and again there gleams—
Point and point—the line, eyes, levelled green brassy fire!

So soon is resumed your chase? Will nothing
appease, nought tire
The furies? And yet I think—I am certain the
race is slack,
And the numbers are nothing like. Not a quar-
ter of the pack!
Feasters and those full-fed are staying behind
. . . Ah why?
We'll sorrow for that too soon! Now,—gallop,
reach home, and die,
Nor ever again leave house, to trust our life in
the trap
For life—we call a sledge! Teriòscha, in my
lap!
Yes, I'll lie down upon you, tight-tie you with
the strings
Here—of my heart! No fear, this time, your
mother flings . . .
Flings? I flung? Never! but think! a woman,
after all
Contending with a wolf! Save you I must and
shall,
Terentiì!

"How now? What, you still
head the race,
Your eyes and tongue and teeth crave fresh
food, Satan-face?
There and there! Plain I struck green fire out!
Flash again?

All a poor fist can do to damage eyes proves vain!
My fist—why not crunch that? He is wanton for . . . O God,
Why give this wolf his taste? Common wolves scrape and prod
The earth till out they scratch some corpse—mere putrid flesh!
Why must this glutton leave the faded, choose the fresh?
Terentiì—God, feel!—his neck keeps fast thy bag
Of holy things, saints' bones, this Satan-face will drag
Forth, and devour along with him, our Pope declared
The relics were to save from danger!

"Spurned, not spared
'Twas through my arms, crossed arms, he—nuzzling now with snout,
Now ripping, tooth and claw—plucked, pulled Terentiì out,
A prize indeed! I saw—how could I else but see?—
My precious one—I bit to hold back—pulled from me!
Up came the others, fell to dancing—did the imps!—

Skipped as they scampered round. There's one
is grey, and limps:
Who knows but old bad Màrpha,—she always
owed me spite
And envied me my births,—skulks out of doors
at night
And turns into a wolf, and joins the sister-
hood,
And laps the youthful life, then slinks from
out the wood,
Squats down at door by dawn, spins there
demure as erst
—No strength, old crone,—not she!—to crawl
forth half a verst!

"Well, I escaped with one: 'twixt one and none
there lies
The space 'twixt heaven and hell. And see, a
rose-light dyes
The endmost snow: 'tis dawn, 'tis day, 'tis safe
at home!
We have outwitted you! Ay, monsters, snarl
and foam,
Fight each the other fiend, disputing for a
share,—
Forgetful, in your greed, our finest off we bear,
Tough Droug and I,—my babe, my boy that
shall be man,
My man that shall be more, do all a hunter can

To trace and follow and find and catch and crucify
Wolves, wolfkins, all your crew! A thousand deaths shall die
The whimperingest cub that ever squeezed the teat!
'Take that!' we'll stab you with,—'the tenderness we met
When, wretches, you danced round—not this, thank God—not this!
Hellhounds, we baulk you!'

"But—Ah, God above!—Bliss, bliss—
Not the band, no! And yet—yes, for Droug knows him! One—
This only of them all has said 'She saves a son!'
His fellows disbelieve such luck: but he believes,
He lets them pick the bones, laugh at him in their sleeves:
He's off and after us,—one speck, one spot, one ball
Grows bigger, bound on bound,—one wolf as good as all!
Oh but I know the trick! Have at the snaky tongue!
That's the right way with wolves! Go, tell your mates I wrung

The panting morsel out, left you to howl your worst!
Now for it—now! Ah me! I know him—thrice-accurst
Satan-face,—him to the end my foe!

"All fight's in vain:
This time the green brass points pierce to my very brain.
I fall—fall as I ought—quite on the babe I guard:
I overspread with flesh the whole of him. Too hard
To die this way, torn piecemeal? Move hence? Not I—one inch!
Gnaw through me, through and through: flat thus I lie nor flinch!
O God, the feel of the fang furrowing my shoulder!—see!
It grinds—it grates the bone. O Kirill under me.
Could I do more? Beside he knew wolf's way to win:
I clung, closed round like wax: yet in he wedged and in,
Past my neck, past my breasts, my heart, until . . . how feels
The onion-bulb your knife parts, pushing through its peels,

Till out you scoop its clove wherein lie stalk and leaf
And bloom and seed unborn?

"That slew me: yes, in brief,
I died then, dead I lay doubtlessly till Droug stopped
Here, I suppose. I come to life, I find me propped
Thus—how or when or why,—I know not. Tell me, friends,
All was a dream: laugh quick and say the nightmare ends!
Soon I shall find my house: 'tis over there: in proof,
Save for that chimney heaped with snow, you'd see the roof
Which holds my three—my two—my one—not one?

"Life's mixed
With misery, yet we live—must live. The Satan fixed
His face on mine so fast, I took its print as pitch
Takes what it cools beneath. Ivàn Ivànovitch,
'Tis you unharden me, you thaw, disperse the thing!
Only keep looking kind, the horror will not cling.

Your face smooths fast away each print of Satan. Tears
—What good they do! Life's sweet, and all its after-years,
Ivàn Ivànovitch, I owe you! Yours am I!
May God reward you, dear!"

Down she sank. Solemnly
Ivàn rose, raised his axe,—for fitly, as she knelt,
Her head lay: well-apart, each side, her arms hung,—dealt
Lightning-swift thunder-strong one blow—no need of more!
Headless she knelt on still: that pine was sound at core
(Neighbours were used to say)—cast-iron-kernelled—which
Taxed for a second stroke Ivàn Ivànovitch.

The man was scant of words as strokes. "It had to be:
I could no other: God it was bade 'Act for me!' "
Then stooping, peering round—what is it now he lacks?
A proper strip of bark wherewith to wipe his axe.
Which done, he turns, goes in, closes the door behind.

The others mute remain, watching the blood-snake wind
Into a hiding-place among the splinter-heaps.

At length, still mute, all move: one lifts,—from where it steeps
Redder each ruddy rag of pine,—the head: two more
Take up the dripping body: then, mute still as before,
Move in a sort of march, march on till marching ends
Opposite to the church; where halting,—who suspends,
By its long hair, the thing, deposits in its place
The piteous head: once more the body shows no trace
Of harm done: there lies whole the Loùscha, maid and wife
And mother, loved until this latest of her life.
Then all sit on the bank of snow which bounds a space
Kept free before the porch for judgment: just the place!

Presently all the souls, man, woman, child, which make
The village up, are found assembling for the sake

Of what is to be done. The very Jews are there:
A Gipsy-troop, though bound with horses for the Fair,
Squats with the rest. Each heart with its conception seethes
And simmers, but no tongue speaks: one may say,—none breathes.

Anon from out the church totters the pope°—the priest—
Hardly alive, so old, a hundred years at least.
With him, the Commune's head, a hoary senior too,
Stàrosta, that's his style,—like Equity Judge with you.—
Natural Jurisconsult: then, fenced about with furs,
Pomeschìk,—Lord of the Land, who wields—and none demurs—
A power of life and death. They stoop, survey the corpse.

Then, straightened on his staff, the Stàrosta—the thorpe's
Sagaciousest old man—hears what you just have heard,
From Droug's first inrush, all, up to Ivàn's last word
"God bade me act for him: I dared not disobey!"

Silence—the Pomeschìk broke with "A wild
wrong way
Of righting wrong—if wrong there were, such
wrath to rouse!
Why was not law observed? What article al-
lows
Whoso may please to play the judge, and,
judgment dealt,
Play executioner, as promptly as we pelt
To death, without appeal, the vermin whose
sole fault
Has been—it dared to leave the darkness of
its vault,
Intrude upon our day! Too sudden and too
rash!
What was this woman's crime? Suppose the
church should crash
Down where I stand, your lord: bound are my
serfs to dare
Their utmost that I 'scape: yet, if the crash-
ing scare
My children,—as you are,—if sons fly, one and
all,
Leave father to his fate,—poor cowards though
I call
The runaways, I pause before I claim their
life
Because they prized it more than mine. I would
each wife

Died for her husband's sake, each son to save
his sire:
'Tis glory, I applaud—scarce duty, I re-
quire.
Ivàn Ivànovitch has done a deed that's named
Murder by law and me: who doubts, may
speak unblamed!"

All turned to the old pope. "Ay, children, I am
old—
How old, myself have got to know no longer.
Rolled
Quite round, my orb of life, from infancy to
age,
Seems passing back again to youth. A certain
stage
At least I reach, or dream I reach, where I
discern
Truer truths, laws behold more lawlike than
we learn
When first we set our foot to tread the course
I trod
With man to guide my steps: who leads me
now is God.
'Your young men shall see visions:' and in
my youth I saw
And paid obedience to man's visionary law:
'Your old men shall dream dreams:' and, in
my age, a hand

Conducts me through the cloud round law to
where I stand
Firm on its base,—know cause, who, before,
knew effect.

"The world lies under me: and nowhere I
detect
So great a gift as this—God's own—of human
life.
'Shall the dead praise thee?' No! 'The whole
live world is rife,
God, with thy glory,' rather! Life then, God's
best of gifts,
For what shall man exchange? For life—when
so he shifts
The weight and turns the scale, lets life for
life restore
God's balance, sacrifice the less to gain the
more,
Substitute—for low life, another's or his own—
Life large and liker God's who gave it: thus
alone
May life extinguish life that life may trulier
be!
How low this law descends on earth, is not
for me
To trace: complexed becomes the simple, in-
tricate
The plain, when I pursue law's winding. 'Tis
the straight

Outflow of law I know and name: to law, the fount
Fresh from God's footstool, friends, follow while I remount.

"A mother bears a child: perfection is complete
So far in such a birth. Enabled to repeat
The miracle of life,—herself was born so just
A type of womankind, that God sees fit to trust
Her with the holy task of giving life in turn.
Crowned by this crowning pride,—how say you, should she spurn
Regality—discrowned, unchilded, by her choice
Of barrenness exchanged for fruit which made rejoice
Creation, though life's self were lost in giving birth
To life more fresh and fit to glorify God's earth?
How say you, should the hand God trusted with life's torch
Kindled to light the world—aware of sparks that scorch,
Let fall the same? Forsooth, her flesh a fire-flake stings:
The mother drops the child! Among what monstrous things
Shall she be classed? Because of motherhood, each male

Yields to his partner place, sinks proudly in
the scale:
His strength owned weakness, wit—folly, and
courage—fear,
Beside the female proved male's mistress—
only here.
The fox-dam, hunger-pined, will slay the felon
sire
Who dares assault her whelp: the beaver,
stretched on fire,
Will die without a groan: no pang avails to
wrest
Her young from where they hide—her sanc-
tuary breast.
What's here then? Answer me, thou dead one,
as, I trow,
Standing at God's own bar, he bids thee an-
swer now!
Thrice crowned wast thou—each crown of
pride, a child—thy charge!
Where are they? Lost? Enough: no need that
thou enlarge
On how or why the loss: life left to utter 'lost'
Condemns itself beyond appeal. The soldier's
post
Guards from the foe's attack the camp he
sentinels:
That he no traitor proved, this and this only
tells—

Over the corpse of him trod foe to foe's success.
Yet—one by one thy crowns torn from thee —thou no less
To scare the world, shame God,—livedst! I hold He saw
The unexampled sin, ordained the novel law,
Whereof first instrument was first intelligence
Found loyal here. I hold that, failing human sense,
The very earth had oped, sky fallen, to efface
Humanity's new wrong, motherhood's first disgrace.
Earth oped not, neither fell the sky, for prompt was found
A man and man enough, head-sober and heart-sound,
Ready to hear God's voice, resolute to obey.
Ivàn Ivànovitch, I hold, has done, this day,
No otherwise than did, in ages long ago,
Moses when he made known the purport of that flow
Of fire athwart the law's twain-tables! I proclaim
Ivàn Ivànovitch God's servant!"

At which name
Uprose that creepy whisper from out the crowd, is wont

To swell and surge and sink when fellowmen confront
A punishment that falls on fellow flesh and blood,
Appallingly beheld—shudderingly understood,
No less, to be the right, the just, the merciful.
"God's servant!" hissed the crowd.
When that Amen grew dull
And died away and left acquittal plain adjudged
"Amen!" last sighed the lord. "There's none shall say I grudged
Escape from punishment in such a novel case.
Deferring to old age and holy life,—be grace
Granted! say I. No less, scruples might shake a sense
Firmer than I boast mine. Law's law, and evidence
Of breach therein lies plain,—blood-red-bright, —all may see!
Yet all absolve the deed: absolved the deed must be!

"And next—as mercy rules the hour—methinks 'twere well
You signify forthwith its sentence, and dispel
The doubts and fears, I judge, which busy now the head

Law puts a halter round—a halo—you, instead!
Ivàn Ivànovitch—what think you he expects
Will follow from his feat? Go, tell him—law protects
Murder, for once: no need he longer keep behind
The Sacred Pictures—where skulks Innocence enshrined,
Or I missay! Go, some! You others, haste and hide
The dismal object there: get done, whate'er betide!"
So, while the youngers raised the corpse, the elders trooped
Silently to the house: where halting, someone stooped,
Listened beside the door; all there was silent too.
Then they held counsel; then pushed door and, passing through,
Stood in the murderer's presence.
Ivàn Ivànovitch
Knelt, building on the floor that Kremlin rare and rich
He deftly cut and carved on lazy winter nights.
Some five young faces watched, breathlessly, as, to rights,

Piece upon piece, he reared the fabric nigh complete.
Stèscha, Ivàn's old mother, sat spinning by the heat
Of the oven where his wife Kàtia stood baking bread.
Ivàn's self, as he turned his honey-coloured head,
Was just in act to drop, 'twixt fir-cones,—each a dome,—
The scooped-out yellow gourd presumably the home
Of Kolokol the Big: the bell, therein to hitch,
—An acorn-cup—was ready: Ivàn Ivànovitch
Turned with it in his mouth.

They told him he was free
As air to walk abroad. "How otherwise?" asked he.

MY STAR

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar°)
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue;

Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs furled:
They must solace themselves with the Saturn° above it.
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it.

EVELYN HOPE

BEAUTIFUL Evelyn Hope is dead!
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
Beginning to die too, in the glass;
Little has yet been changed, I think:
The shutters are shut, no light may pass
Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name;
It was not her time to love; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,

And now was quiet, now astir,
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,—
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?
What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire and dew—
And, just because I was thrice as old
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was naught to each, must I be told?
We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

No, indeed! for God above
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love:
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few:
Much is to learn, much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come,—at last it will,
When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)
In the lower earth, in the years long still,
That body and soul so pure and gay?
Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geranium's red—

And what would you do with me, in fine,
In the new life come in the old one's stead.

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,
Gained me the gains of various men,
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope,
Either I missed or itself missed me:
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
What is the issue? let us see!

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!
My heart seemed full as it could hold;
There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
So, hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep:
See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!
There, that is our secret: go to sleep!
You will wake, and remember, and understand.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

WHERE the quiet-colored end of evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray
or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding
far
Peace or war.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
Into one),
Where the domed and daring palace shot its
spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be
pressed,
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds

Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colored eve
Smiles to leave

To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts, — and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
Gold, of course.
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

CRISTINA°

I

SHE should never have looked at me
If she meant I should not love her!
There are plenty . . . men, you call such,
I suppose . . . she may discover
All her soul too, if she pleases,
And yet leave much as she found them:
But I'm not so, and she knew it
When she fixed me, glancing round them.

II

What? To fix me thus meant nothing?
But I can't tell (there's my weakness)
What her look said!—no vile cant, sure,
About "need to strew the bleakness
"Of some lone shore with its pearl seed.
"That the sea feels"—no "strange yearning."
"That such souls have, most to lavish
"Where there's chance of least returning."

III

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
But not quite so sunk that moments,
Sure tho' seldom, are denied us,
When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones,
And apprise it if pursuing
Or the right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing.

IV

There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled-up honours perish,
Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
While just this or that poor impulse,

Which for once had play unstifled,
Seems the sole work of a life-time
That away the rest have trifled.

V

Doubt you if, in some such moment,
As she fixed me, she felt clearly,
Ages past the soul existed,
Here an age 'tis resting merely,
And hence fleets again for ages,
While the true end, sole and single,
It stops here for is, this love-way,
With some other soul to mingle?

VI

Else it loses what it lived for,
And eternally must lose it;
Better ends may be in prospect,
Deeper blisses (if you choose it),
But this life's end and this love-bliss
Have been lost here. Doubt you whether
This she felt, as looking at me,
Mine and her souls rushed together?

VII

Oh, observe! Of course, next moment,
The world's honours, in derision,

Trampled out the light for ever:
  Never fear but there's provision
Of the devil's to quench knowledge
  Lest we walk the earth in rapture!
—Making those who catch God's secret
  Just so much more prize their capture!

VIII

Such am I: the secret's mine now!
  She has lost me, I have gained her;
Her soul's mine: and thus, grown perfect,
  I shall pass my life's remainder.
Life will just hold out the proving
  Both our powers, alone and blended:
And then, come next life quickly!
  This world's use will have been ended.

MISCONCEPTIONS

THIS is a spray the Bird clung to,
  Making it blossom with pleasure,
Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,
  Fit for her nest and her treasure.
  Oh, what a hope beyond measure
Was the poor spray's, which the flying feet
    hung to,—
So to be singled out, built in, and sung to!

This is a heart the Queen leant on,
  Thrilled in a minute erratic,

Ere the true bosom she bent on,
  Meet for love's regal dalmatic.°
  Oh, what a fancy ecstatic
Was the poor heart's, ere the wanderer went on—
Love to be saved for it, proffered to, spent on!

NATURAL MAGIC

ALL I can say is—I saw it!
The room was as bare as your hand.
I locked in the swarth little lady,—I swear,
From the head to the foot of her—well, quite as bare!
"No Nautch° shall cheat me," said I, "taking my stand
At this bolt which I draw!" And this bolt—I withdraw it,
And there laughs the lady, not bare, but embowered
With—who knows what verdure, o'erfruited, o'erflowered?
Impossible! Only—I saw it!

All I can sing is—I feel it!
This life was as blank as that room;
I let you pass in here. Precaution, indeed?
Walls, ceiling and floor,—not a chance for a weed!

Wide opens the entrance: where's cold now,
where's gloom?
No May to sow seed here, no June to
reveal it,
Behold you enshrined in these blooms of your
bringing,
These fruits of your bearing—nay, birds of
your winging!
A fairy-tale! Only—I feel it!

APPARITIONS

(Prologue to "The Two Poets of Croisic")

Such a starved bank of moss
Till, that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
Violets were born!

Sky—what a scowl of cloud
Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud:
Splendid, a star!

World—how it walled about
Life with disgrace
Till God's own smile came out:
That was thy face!

A WALL

(Prologue to "Pacchiarotto")

OH, the old wall here! How I could pass
  Life in a long midsummer day,
My feet confined to a plot of grass,
  My eyes from a wall not once away!

And lush and lithe do the creepers clothe
  Yon wall I watch, with a wealth of green:
Its bald red bricks draped, nothing loth,
  In lappets of tangle they laugh between.

Now, what is it makes pulsate the robe?
  Why tremble the sprays? What life o'er-
    brims
The body,—the house, no eye can probe,—
  Divined, as beneath a robe, the limbs?

And there again! But my heart may guess
  Who tripped behind; and she sang perhaps:
So, the old wall throbbed, and its life's excess
  Died out and away in the leafy wraps!

Wall upon wall are between us: life
  And song should away from heart to heart!
I—prison-bird, with a ruddy strife
  At breast, and a lip whence storm-notes
    start—

Hold on, hope hard in the subtle thing
That's spirit: though cloistered fast, soar free;
Account as wood, brick, stone, this ring
Of the rueful neighbors, and—forth to thee!

CONFESSIONS

WHAT is he buzzing in my ears?
"Now that I come to die,
Do I view the world as a vale of tears?"
Ah, reverend sir, not I!

What I viewed there once, what I view again
Where the physic bottles stand
On the table's edge,—is a suburb lane,
With a wall to my bedside hand.

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
From a house you could descry
O'er the garden-wall, is the curtain blue
Or green to a healthy eye?

To mine, it serves for the old June weather
Blue above lane and wall;
And that farthest bottle labelled "Ether"
Is the house o'ertopping all.

At a terrace, somewhere near the stopper,
There watched for me, one June,

A girl: I know, sir, it's improper,
My poor mind's out of tune.

Only, there was a way . . . you crept
Close by the side, to dodge
Eyes in the house, two eyes except:
They styled their house "The Lodge."

What right had a lounger up their lane?
But, by creeping very close,
With the good wall's help,—their eyes might strain
And stretch themselves to Oes,

Yet never catch her and me together,
As she left the attic, there,
By the rim of the bottle labelled "Ether,"
And stole from stair to stair.

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate. Alas,
We loved, sir—used to meet:
How sad and bad and mad it was—
But then, how it was sweet!

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

LET's contend no more, Love,
Strive nor weep:
All be as before, Love,
—Only sleep!

A Woman's Last Word

What so wild as words are?
I and thou
In debate, as birds are,
Hawk on bough!

See the creature stalking
While we speak!
Hush and hide the talking,
Cheek on cheek!

What so false as truth is,
False to thee?
Where the serpent's tooth is,
Shun the tree—

Where the apple reddens,
Never pry—
Lest we lose our Edens,
Eve and I.

Be a god and hold me
With a charm!
Be a man and fold me
With thine arm!

Teach me, only teach, Love!
As I ought
I will speak thy speech, Love,
Think thy thought—

Meet, if thou require it,
  Both demands,
Laying flesh and spirit
  In thy hands.

That shall be to-morrow,
  Not to-night:
I must bury sorrow
  Out of sight:

—Must a little weep, Love,
  (Foolish me!)
And so fall asleep, Love,
  Loved by thee.

A PRETTY WOMAN

THAT fawn-skin-dappled hair of hers,
    And the blue eye
    Dear and dewy,
And that infantine fresh air of hers!

To think men cannot take you, Sweet,
    And infold you,
    Ay, and hold you,
And so keep you what they make you, Sweet!

You like us for a glance, you know—
    For a word's sake,

Or a sword's sake:
All's the same, whate'er the chance, you know.

And in turn we make you ours, we say—
You and youth too,
Eyes and mouth too,
All the face composed of flowers, we say.

All's our own, to make the most of, Sweet—
Sing and say for,
Watch and pray for,
Keep a secret or go boast of, Sweet!

But for loving, why, you would not, Sweet,
Tho' we prayed you,
Paid you, brayed you
In a mortar—for you could not, Sweet!

So, we leave the sweet face fondly there,
Be its beauty
Its sole duty!
Let all hope of grace beyond, lie there!

And while the face lies quiet there,
Who shall wonder
That I ponder
A conclusion? I will try it there.

As,—why must one, for the love foregone
Scout mere liking?

Thunder-striking
Earth,—the heaven, we looked above for, gone!

Why, with beauty, needs there money be,
Love with liking?
Crush the fly-king
In his gauze, because no honey-bee?

May not liking be so simple-sweet,
If love grew there
'Twould undo there
All that breaks the cheek to dimples sweet?

Is the creature too imperfect, say?
Would you mend it
And so end it?
Since not all addition perfects aye!

Or is it of its kind, perhaps,
Just perfection—
Whence, rejection
Of a grace not to its mind, perhaps?

Shall we burn up, tread that face at once
Into tinder,
And so hinder
Sparks from kindling all the place at once?

Or else kiss away one's soul on her?
Your love-fancies!

—A sick man sees
Truer, when his hot eyes roll on her!

Thus the craftsman thinks to grace the rose,—
Plucks a mould-flower
For his gold flower,
Uses fine things that efface the rose.

Rosy rubies make its cup more rose,
Precious metals
Ape the petals,—
Last, some old king locks it up, morose!

Then how grace a rose? I know a way!
Leave it, rather.
Must you gather?
Smell, kiss, wear it—at last, throw away.

YOUTH AND ART

IT once might have been, once only:
We lodged in a street together,
You, a sparrow on the housetop lonely,
I, a lone she-bird of his feather.

Your trade was with sticks and clay,
You thumbed, thrust, patted and polished,
Then laughed "They will see some day
Smith made, and Gibson° demolished."

My business was song, song, song;
I chirped, cheeped, trilled and twittered,
"Kate Brown's on the boards ere long,
And Grisi's° existence embittered!"

I earned no more by a warble
Than you by a sketch in plaster;
You wanted a piece of marble,
I needed a music-master.

We studied hard in our styles,
Chipped each at a crust like Hindoos,°
For air, looked out on the tiles,
For fun, watched each other's windows.

You lounged, like a boy of the South,
Cap and blouse—nay, a bit of beard too;
Or you got it, rubbing your mouth
With fingers the clay adhered to.

And I—soon managed to find
Weak points in the flower-fence facing,
Was forced to put up a blind
And be safe in my corset-lacing.

No harm! It was not my fault
If you never turned your eye's tail up
As I shook upon E *in alt.*,
Or ran the chromatic scale up:

For spring bade the sparrows pair,
  And the boys and girls gave guesses,
And stalls in our street looked rare
  With bulrush and watercresses.

Why did not you pinch a flower
  In a pellet of clay and fling it?
Why did not I put a power
  Of thanks in a look, or sing it?

I did look, sharp as a lynx,
  (And yet the memory rankles)
When models arrived, some minx
  Tripped up stairs, she and her ankles.

But I think I gave you as good!
  "That foreign fellow,—who can know
How she pays, in a playful mood,
  For his tuning her that piano?"

Could you say so, and never say
  "Suppose we join hands and fortunes,
And I fetch her from over the way,
  Her, piano, and long tunes and short tunes?"

No, no: you would not be rash,
  Nor I rasher and something over:
You've to settle yet Gibson's hash,
  And Grisi yet lives in clover.

But you meet the Prince at the Board,
  I'm queen myself at *bals-paré*,°
I've married a rich old lord,
  And you're dubbed knight and an R. A.°

Each life unfulfilled, you see;
  It hangs still, patchy and scrappy:
We have not sighed deep, laughed free,
  Starved, feasted, despaired,—been happy.

And nobody calls you a dunce,
  And people suppose me clever:
This could but have happened once,
  And we missed it, lost it forever.

A TALE

(*Epilogue to "The Two Poets of Croisic"*)

WHAT a pretty tale you told me
  Once upon a time
—Said you found it somewhere (scold me!)
  Was it prose or was it rhyme,
Greek or Latin? Greek, you said,
While your shoulder propped my head.

Anyhow there's no forgetting
  This much if no more,
That a poet (pray, no petting!)
  Yes, a bard, sir, famed of yore,

Went where suchlike used to go,
Singing for a prize, you know.

Well, he had to sing, nor merely
  Sing but play the lyre;
Playing was important clearly
  Quite as singing: I desire,
Sir, you keep the fact in mind
For a purpose that's behind.

There stood he, while deep attention
  Held the judges round,
—Judges able, I should mention,
  To detect the slightest sound
Sung or played amiss: such ears
Had old judges, it appears!

None the less he sang out boldly,
  Played in time and tune,
Till the judges, weighing coldly
  Each note's worth, seemed, late or soon,
Sure to smile "In vain one tries
Picking faults out: take the prize!"

When, a mischief! Were they seven
  Strings the lyre possessed?
Oh, and afterwards eleven,
  Thank you! Well, sir,—who had guessed
Such ill luck in store?—it happed
One of those same seven strings snapped.

All was lost, then! No! a cricket
  (What "cicada"? Pooh!)
—Some mad thing that left its thicket
  For mere love of music—flew
With its little heart on fire,
Lighted on the crippled lyre.

So that when (Ah, joy!) our singer
  For his truant string
Feels with disconcerted finger,
  What does cricket else but fling
Fiery heart forth, sound the note
Wanted by the throbbing throat?

Ay and, ever to the ending,
  Cricket chirps at need,
Executes the hand's intending,
  Promptly, perfectly,—indeed
Saves the singer from defeat
With her chirrup low and sweet.

Till, at ending, all the judges
  Cry with one assent
"Take the prize—a prize who grudges
  Such a voice and instrument?
Why, we took your lyre for harp,
So it shrilled us forth F sharp!"

Did the conqueror spurn the creature,
  Once its service done?

That's no such uncommon feature
  In the case when Music's son
Finds his Lotte's° power too spent
For aiding soul-development.

No! This other, on returning
  Homeward, prize in hand,
Satisfied his bosom's yearning:
  (Sir, I hope you understand!)
—Said "Some record there must be
Of this cricket's help to me!"

So, he made himself a statue:
  Marble stood, life-size;
On the lyre, he pointed at you,
  Perched his partner in the prize;
Never more apart you found
Her, he throned, from him, she crowned.

That's the tale: its application?
  Somebody I know
Hopes one day for reputation
  Through his poetry that's—Oh,
All so learned and so wise
And deserving of a prize!

If he gains one, will some ticket,
  When his statue's built,
Tell the gazer " 'Twas a cricket
  Helped my crippled lyre, whose lilt

Sweet and low, when strength usurped
Softness' place i' the scale, she chirped?

"For as victory was nighest,
While I sang and played,—
With my lyre at lowest, highest,
Right alike,—one string that made
'Love' sound soft was snapt in twain
Never to be heard again,—

"Had not a kind cricket fluttered,
Perched upon the place
Vacant left, and duly uttered
'Love, Love, Love,' whene'er the bass
Asked the treble to atone
For its somewhat sombre drone."

But you don't know music! Wherefore
Keep on casting pearls
To a—poet? All I care for
Is—to tell him that a girl's
"Love" comes aptly in when gruff
Grows his singing. (There, enough!)

CAVALIER TUNES

I. MARCHING ALONG

KENTISH Sir Byng° stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed° Parliament swing:
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop

Boot and Saddle

And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

God for King Charles°! Pym° and such carles
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles!
Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup
Till you're—

CHORUS.—Marching along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Hampden° to hell, and his obsequies' knell.
Serve Hazelrig,° Fiennes,° and young Harry° as well!
England, good cheer! Rupert° is near!
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,

CHO.—Marching along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls
To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!

Hold by the right, you double your might;
So, onward to Nottingham,° fresh for the fight,

CHO.—March we along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!

II. GIVE A ROUSE

KING CHARLES, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since?
Who raised me the house that sank once?
Who helped me to gold I spent since?
Who found me in wine you drank once?

CHO.—King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool's side that begot him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh else,
While Noll's° damned troopers shot him?

CHO.—King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

III. BOOT AND SADDLE

BOOT, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray.

CHO.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay—

CHO.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array:
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,

CHO.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,

Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
I've better counsellors; what counsel they?

CHO.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

MUCKLE-MOUTH MEG

FROWNED the Laird on the Lord:° "So, red-handed I catch thee?
Death-doomed by our Law of the Border!
We've a gallows outside and a chiel° to dispatch thee:
Who trespasses—hangs: all's in order."

He met frown with smile, did the young English gallant:
Then the Laird's dame: "Nay, Husband, I beg!
He's comely: be merciful! Grace for the callant°
—If he marries our Muckle-mouth Meg!"°

No mile-wide-mouthed monster of yours do I marry:
Grant rather the gallows!" laughed he.
"Foul fare kith and kin of you—why do you tarry?"
"To tame your fierce temper!" quoth she.

"Shove him quick in the Hole,° shut him fast for a week:

Cold, darkness and hunger work wonders:
Who lion-like roars now, mouse-fashion will squeak,
And 'it rains' soon succeed to 'it thunders.' "

A week did he bide in the cold and the dark
—Not hunger: for duly at morning
In flitted a lass, and a voice like a lark
Chirped "Muckle-mouth Meg still ye're scorning?

"Go hang, but here's parritch° to hearten ye first!"
"Did Meg's muckle-mouth boast within some
Such music as yours, mine should match it or burst:
No frog-jaws! So tell folk, my Winsome!"

Soon week came to end, and, from Hole's door set wide,
Out he marched, and there waited the lassie:
"Yon gallows, or Muckle-mouth Meg for a bride!
Consider! Sky's blue and turf's grassy:

"Life's sweet: shall I say ye wed Muckle-mouth Meg?"
"Not I," quoth the stout heart: "too eerie
The mouth that can swallow a bubblyjock's° egg:
Shall I let it munch mine? Never, Dearie!"

"Not Muckle-mouth Meg? Wow, the obstinate man!
Perhaps he would rather wed me!"
"Ay, would he—with just for a dowry your can!"
"I'm Muckle-mouth Meg" chirruped she.

"Then so—so—so—so—" as he kissed her apace—
"Will I widen thee out till thou turnest
From Margaret Minnikin-mou',° by God's grace,
To Muckle-mouth Meg in good earnest!"

HOME THOUGHTS FROM THE SEA

NOBLY, nobly, Cape Saint Vincent° to the Northwest died away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz° Bay;
Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;
In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned Gibraltar grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me: how can I help England?"—say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God and pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

SUMMUM BONUM

All the breath and the bloom of the year in
the bag of one bee:
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the
heart of one gem:
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the
shine of the sea:
Breath and bloom, shade and shine,—wonder,
wealth, and—how far above them—
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl,—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—
all were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

A FACE

If one could have that little head of hers
Painted upon a background of pale gold,
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!
No shade encroaching on the matchless mould
Of those two lips, which should be opening
soft
In the pure profile; not as when she laughs,
For that spoils all: but rather as if aloft
Yon hyacinth, she loves so, leaned its staff's
Burden of honey-coloured buds to kiss
And capture 'twixt the lips apart for this.

Then her lithe neck, three fingers might surround,
How it should waver on the pale gold ground
Up to the fruit-shaped, perfect chin it lifts!
I know, Correggio loves to mass, in rifts
Of heaven, his angel faces, orb on orb
Breaking its outline, burning shades absorb:
But these are only massed there, I should think,
Waiting to see some wonder momently
Grow out, stand full, fade slow against the sky
(That's the pale ground you'd see this sweet face by),
All heaven, meanwhile, condensed into one eye
Which fears to lose the wonder, should it wink.

SONGS FROM PIPPA PASSES

DAY!
Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last:
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay,
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

A Face

ALL service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

THE year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

GIVE her but a least excuse to love me!
When—where—
How—can this arm establish her above me,
If fortune fixed her as my lady there,
There already, to eternally reprove me?
("Hist!"—said Kate the Queen;
But "Oh!" cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
"'Tis only a page that carols unseen,
Crumbling your hounds their messes!")

Is she wronged?—To the rescue of her honor,
My heart!

Is she poor?—What costs it to be styled a donor?
Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.
But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!
("Nay, list!"—bade Kate the Queen;
And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
"'Tis only a page that carols unseen,
Fitting your hawks their jesses!")

THE LOST LEADER

JUST for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,

Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare° was of us, Milton° was for us,
Burns,° Shelley,° were with us,—they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
—He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

We shall march prospering—not through his presence;
Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire:
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!
There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!

Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

APPARENT FAILURE

"We shall soon lose a celebrated building."
—*Paris Newspaper.*

No, for I'll save it! Seven years since,
I passed through Paris, stopped a day
To see the baptism of your Prince;°
Saw, made my bow, and went my way:
Walking the heat and headache off,
I took the Seine-side, you surmise,
Thought of the Congress,° Gortschakoff,°
Cavour's° appeal and Buol's° replies,
So sauntered till—what met my eyes?

Only the Doric little Morgue!
The dead-house where you show your drowned:
Petrarch's Vaucluse° makes proud the Sorgue,°
Your Morgue has made the Seine renowned.
One pays one's debt° in such a case;
I plucked up heart and entered,—stalked,
Keeping a tolerable face

Compared with some whose cheeks were chalked:
Let them! No Briton's to be balked!

First came the silent gazers; next,
A screen of glass, we're thankful for;
Last, the sight's self, the sermon's text,
The three men who did most abhor
Their life in Paris yesterday,
So killed themselves: and now, enthroned
Each on his copper couch, they lay
Fronting me, waiting to be owned.
I thought, and think, their sin's atoned.

Poor men, God made, and all for that!
The reverence struck me; o'er each head
Religiously was hung its hat,
Each coat dripped by the owner's bed,
Sacred from touch: each had his berth,
His bounds, his proper place of rest,
Who last night tenanted on earth
Some arch, where twelve such slept abreast,—
Unless the plain asphalt seemed best.

How did it happen, my poor boy?
You wanted to be Buonaparte
And have the Tuileries° for toy,
And could not, so it broke your heart?
You, old one by his side, I judge,

Were, red as blood, a socialist,
A leveller! Does the Empire grudge
You've gained° what no Republic missed?
Be quiet, and unclench your fist!

And this—why, he was red in vain,
Or black,—poor fellow that is blue°!
What fancy was it, turned your brain?
Oh, women were the prize for you!
Money gets women, cards and dice
Get money, and ill-luck gets just
The copper couch and one clear nice
Cool squirt of water o'er your bust,
The right thing to extinguish lust!

It's wiser being good than bad;
It's safer being meek than fierce:
It's fitter being sane than mad.
My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That, after Last, returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst.

FEARS AND SCRUPLES

HERE'S my case. Of old I used to love him,
This same unseen friend, before I knew:

Dream there was none like him, none above him,
Wake to hope and trust my dream was true.

Loved I not his letters° full of beauty?
Not his actions famous far and wide?
Absent, he would know I vowed him duty,
Present, he would find me at his side.

Pleasant fancy! for I had but letters,
Only knew of actions by hearsay:
He himself was busied with my betters;
What of that? My turn must come some day.

"Some day" proving—no day! Here's the puzzle.
Passed and passed my turn is. Why complain?
He's so busied! If I could but muzzle
People's foolish mouths that give me pain!

"Letters?" (hear them!) "You a judge of writing?"
Ask the experts!—How they shake the head
O'er these characters, your friend's inditing—
Call them forgery from A to Z°!

"Actions? Where's your certain proof" (they bother),
"He, of all you find so great and good,

He, he only, claims this, that, the other
Action—claimed by men, a multitude?"

I can simply wish I might refute you,
Wish my friend would,—by a word, a wink,—
Bid me stop that foolish mouth,—you brute you!
He keeps absent,—why, I cannot think.

Never mind! Though foolishness may flout me,
One thing's sure enough: 'tis neither frost,
No, nor fire, shall freeze or burn from out me
Thanks for truth—though falsehood, gained —though lost.

All my days, I'll go the softlier, sadlier,
For that dream's sake! How forget the thrill
Through and through me as I thought "The gladlier
Lives my friend because I love him still!"

Ah, but there's a menace someone utters!
"What and if your friend at home play tricks?
Peep at hide-and-seek behind the shutters?
Mean your eyes should pierce through solid bricks?

"What and if he, frowning, wake you, dreamy?
Lay on you the blame that bricks—conceal?

Say '*At least I saw who did not see me,*
Does see now, and presently shall feel'?"

"Why, that makes your friend a monster!" say you:
"Had his house no window? At first nod.
Would you not have hailed him?" Hush, I pray you!
What if this friend happen to be—God?

INSTANS TYRANNUS

I

OF the million or two, more or less,
I rule and possess,
One man, for some cause undefined,
Was least to my mind.

II

I struck him, he grovelled of course—
For, what was his force?
I pinned him to earth with my weight
And persistence of hate:
And he lay, would not moan, would not curse.
As his lot might be worse.

III

"Were the object less mean, would he stand
At the swing of my hand!

For obscurity helps him and blots
The hole where he squats."
So, I set my five wits on the stretch
To inveigle the wretch.
All in vain! Gold and jewels I threw,
Still he couched there perdue;
I tempted his blood and his flesh,
Hid in roses my mesh,
Choicest cates and the flagon's best spilth:
Still he kept to his filth.

IV

Had he kith now or kin, were access
To his heart, did I press:
Just a son or a mother to seize!
No such booty as these.
Were it simply a friend to pursue
'Mid my million or two,
Who could pay me in person or pelf
What he owes me himself!
No: I could not but smile through my chafe:
For the fellow lay safe
As his mates do, the midge and the nit,
—Through minuteness, to wit.

V

Then a humor more great took its place
At the thought of his face,

The droop, the low cares of the mouth,
The trouble uncouth
'Twixt the brows, all that air one is fain
To put out of its pain.
And, "no!" I admonished myself,
"Is one mocked by an elf,
Is one baffled by toad or by rat?
The gravamen's° in that!
How the lion, who crouches to suit
His back to my foot,
Would admire that I stand in debate!
But the small turns the great
If it vexes you,—that is the thing!
Toad or rat vex the king?
Though I waste half my realm to unearth
Toad or rat, 'tis well worth!"

VI

So, I soberly laid my last plan
To extinguish the man.
Round his creep-hole, with never a break,
Ran my fires for his sake;
Over-head, did my thunder combine
With my underground mine:
Till I looked from my labor content
To enjoy the event.

VII

When sudden . . . how think ye, the end?
Did I say "without friend?"

Say rather, from marge to blue marge
The whole sky grew his targe
With the sun's self for visible boss,
While an Arm ran across
Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
Where the wretch was safe prest!
Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
The man sprang to his feet,
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!
—So, *I* was afraid!

THE PATRIOT

AN OLD STORY

IT was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels—
But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered, "And afterward, what else?"

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep!
Naught man could do, have I left undone:
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
Just a palsied few at the windows set;
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
"Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
Me?"—God might question; now instead,
'Tis God shall repay: I am safer so.

CLIVE

I AND Clive were friends—and why not?
Friends! I think you laugh, my lad.

Clive it was gave England India, while your father gives—egad,
England nothing but the graceless boy who lures him on to speak—
"Well, Sir, you and Clive were comrades—" with a tongue thrust in your cheek!
Very true: in my eyes, your eyes, all the world's eyes, Clive was man,
I was, am and ever shall be—mouse, nay, mouse of all its clan
Sorriest sample, if you take the kitchen's estimate for fame;
While the man Clive—he fought Plassy,° spoiled the clever foreign game,
Conquered and annexed and Englished!

Never mind! As o'er my punch
(You away) I sit of evenings,—silence, save for biscuit-crunch,
Black, unbroken,—thought grows busy, thrids° each pathway of old years,
Notes this forthright, that meander, till the long past life appears
Like an outspread map of country plodded through, each mile and rood,
Once, and well remembered still: I'm startled in my solitude
Ever and anon by—what's the sudden mocking light that breaks

On me as I slap the table till no rummer-glass but shakes
While I ask—aloud, I do believe, God help me! —"Was it thus?
Can it be that so I faltered, stopped when just one step for us—"
(Us,—you were not born, I grant, but surely some day born would be)
"—One bold step had gained a province" (figurative talk, you see)
"Got no end of wealth and honour,—yet I stood stock still no less?"
—"For I was not Clive," you comment: but it needs no Clive to guess
Wealth were handy, honour ticklish, did no writing on the wall°
Warn me "Trespasser, 'ware man-traps!" Him who braves that notice—call
Hero! none of such heroics suit myself who read plain words,
Doff my hat, and leap no barrier. Scripture says the land's the Lord's:
Louts then—what avail the thousand, noisy in a smock-frocked ring,
All-agog to have me trespass, clear the fence, be Clive their king?
Higher warrant must you show me ere I set one foot before
T'other in that dark direction, though I stand for evermore

Poor as Job and meek as Moses.° Evermore?
No! By-and-by
Job grows rich and Moses valiant, Clive turns out less wise than I.
Don't object "Why call him friend, then?"
Power is power, my boy, and still
Marks a man,—God's gift magnific, exercised for good or ill.
You've your boot now on my hearth-rug, tread what was a tiger's skin:
Rarely such a royal monster as I lodged the bullet in!
True, he murdered half a village, so his own death came to pass;
Still, for size and beauty, cunning, courage—ah, the brute he was!
Why, that Clive,—that youth, that greenhorn, that quill-driving clerk, in fine,—
He sustained a siege in Arcot°. . . . But the world knows! Pass the wine.

Where did I break off at? How bring Clive in? Oh, you mentioned "fear"!
Just so: and, said I, that minds me of a story you shall hear.

We were friends then, Clive and I: so, when the clouds, about the orb
Late supreme, encroaching slowly, surely, threatened to absorb

Ray by ray its noontide brilliance,—friendship might, with steadier eye
Drawing near, bear what had burned else, now no blaze—all majesty.
Too much bee's-wing floats my figure? Well, suppose a castle's new:
None presume to climb its ramparts, none find foothold sure for shoe
'Twixt those squares and squares of granite plating the impervious pile
As his scale-mail's warty iron cuirasses a crocodile.
Reels that castle thunder-smitten, storm-dismantled? From without
Scrambling up by crack and crevice, every cockney prates about
Towers—the heap he kicks now! turrets—just the measure of his cane!
Will that do? Observe moreover—(same similitude again)—
Such a castle seldom crumbles by sheer stress of cannonade:
'Tis when foes are foiled and fighting's finished that vile rains invade,
Grass o'ergrows, o'ergrows till night-birds congregating find no holes
Fit to build in like the topmost sockets made for banner-poles.
So Clive crumbled slow in London—crashed at last.

A week before,
Dining with him,—after trying churchyard-chat of days of yore,—
Both of us stopped, tired as tombstones, head-piece, foot-piece, when they lean
Each to other, drowsed in fog-smoke, o'er a coffined Past between.
As I saw his head sink heavy, guessed the soul's extinguishment
By the blazing eyeball, noticed how the furtive fingers went
Where a drug-box skulked behind the honest liquor,—"One more throw
Try for Clive!" thought I: "Let's venture some good rattling question!" So—
"Come, Clive, tell us"—out I blurted—"what to tell in turn, years hence,
When my boy—suppose I have one—asks me on what evidence
I maintain my friend of Plassy proved a warrior every whit
Worth your Alexanders, Cæsars, Marlboroughs and—what said Pitt?—
Frederick the Fierce himself! Clive told me once"—I want to say—
"Which feat out of all those famous doings bore the bell away
—In his own calm estimation, mark you, not the mob's rough guess—

Which stood foremost as evincing what Clive called courageousness!
Come! what moment of the minute, what speck-centre in the wide
Circle of the action saw your mortal fairly deified?
(Let alone that filthy sleep-stuff, swallow bold this wholesome Port!)
If a friend has leave to question,—when were you most brave, in short?"

Up he arched his brows o' the instant—formidably Clive again.
"When was I most brave? I'd answer, were the instance half as plain
As another instance that's a brain-lodged crystal—curse it!—here
Freezing when my memory touches—ugh!—the time I felt most fear.
Ugh! I cannot say for certain if I showed fear—anyhow,
Fear I felt, and, very likely, shuddered, since I shiver now."

"Fear!" smiled I. "Well, that's the rarer: that's a specimen to seek,
Ticket up in one's museum, *Mind-Freaks, Lord Clive's Fear, Unique!*"

Down his brows dropped. On the table painfully he pored as though
Tracing, in the stains and streaks there, thoughts encrusted long ago.
When he spoke 'twas like a lawyer reading word by word some will,
Some blind jungle of a statement,—beating on and on until
Out there leaps fierce life to fight with.

"This fell in my factor°-days.
Desk-drudge, slaving at St. David's, one must game, or drink, or craze.
I chose gaming: and,—because your high-flown gamesters hardly take
Umbrage at a factor's elbow if the factor pays his stake,—
I was winked at in a circle where the company was choice,
Captain This and Major That, men high of colour, loud of voice,
Yet indulgent, condescending to the modest juvenile
Who not merely risked but lost his hard-earned guineas with a smile.

"Down I sat to cards, one evening,—had for my antagonist
Somebody whose name's a secret—you'll know why—so, if you list,

Call him Cock o' the Walk, my scarlet son of
Mars from head to heel!
Play commenced: and, whether Cocky fancied
that a clerk must feel
Quite sufficient honour came of bending over
one green baize,
I the scribe with him the warrior,—guessed no
penman dared to raise
Shadow of objection should the honour stay
but playing end
More or less abruptly,—whether disinclined he
grew to spend
Practice strictly scientific on a booby born to
stare
At—not ask of—lace-and-ruffles if the hand
they hide plays fair,—
Anyhow, I marked a movement when he bade
me 'Cut!'

"I rose.
'Such the new manœuvre, Captain? I'm a nov-
ice: knowledge grows.
What, you force a card, you cheat, Sir?'

"Never did a thunder-clap
Cause emotion, startle Thyrsis locked with
Chloe° in his lap,
As my word and gesture (down I flung my
cards to join the pack)
Fired the man of arms, whose visage, simply
red before, turned black

When he found his voice, he stammered 'That
expression once again!'

" 'Well, you forced a card and cheated!'

" 'Possibly a factor's brain,
Busied with his all-important balance of accounts, may deem
Weighing words superfluous trouble: *cheat* to clerkly ears may seem
Just the joke for friends to venture: but we are not friends, you see!
When a gentleman is joked with,—if he's good at repartee,
He rejoins, as do I—Sirrah, on your knees, withdraw in full!
Beg my pardon, or be sure a kindly bullet through your skull
Lets in light and teaches manners to what brain it finds! Choose quick—
Have your life snuffed out or, kneeling, pray me trim yon candle-wick!'

" 'Well, you cheated!'

"Then outbroke a howl from all the friends around.
To his feet sprang each in fury, fists were clenched and teeth were ground.
'End it! no time like the present! Captain, yours were our disgrace!

No delay, begin and finish! Stand back, leave
the pair a space!
Let civilians be instructed: henceforth simply
ply the pen,
Fly the sword! This clerk's no swordsman?
Suit him with a pistol, then!
Even odds! A dozen paces 'twixt the most and
least expert
Make a dwarf a giant's equal: nay, the dwarf,
if he's alert,
Likelier hits the broader target!'

"Up we stood accordingly.
As they handed me the weapon, such was my
soul's thirst to try
Then and there conclusions with this bully,
tread on and stamp out
Every spark of his existence, that,—crept close
to, curled about
By that toying tempting teasing fool-forefin-
ger's middle joint,—
Don't you guess?—the trigger yielded. Gone
my chance! and at the point
Of such prime success moreover: scarce an
inch above his head
Went my ball to hit the wainscot. He was
living, I was dead.

"Up he marched in flaming triumph—'twas his
right, mind!—up, within

Just an arm's length. 'Now, my clerkling,' chuckled Cocky with a grin
As the levelled piece quite touched me, 'Now, Sir Counting-House, repeat
That expression which I told you proved bad manners! Did I cheat?'

" 'Cheat you did, you knew you cheated, and, this moment, know as well.
As for me, my homely breeding bids you—fire and go to Hell!'

"Twice the muzzle touched my forehead. Heavy barrel, flurried wrist,
Either spoils a steady lifting. Thrice: then, 'Laugh at Hell who list,
I can't! God's no fable either. Did this boy's eye wink once? No!
There's no standing him and Hell and God all three against me,—so,
I did cheat!'

"And down he threw the pistol, out rushed—by the door
Possibly, but, as for knowledge if by chimney, roof or floor,
He effected disappearance — I'll engage no glance was sent
That way by a single starer, such a blank astonishment

Swallowed up their senses: as for speaking—
mute they stood as mice.

"Mute not long, though! Such reaction, such
a hubbub in a trice!
'Rogue and rascal! Who'd have thought it?
What's to be expected next,
When His Majesty's Commission serves a
sharper as pretext
For . . . But where's the need of wasting time
now? Nought requires delay:
Punishment the Service cries for: let disgrace
be wiped away
Publicly, in good broad daylight! Resigna-
tion? No, indeed
Drum and fife must play the Rogue's March,
rank and file be free to speed
Tardy marching on the rogue's part by appli-
ance in the rear
—Kicks administered shall right this wronged
civilian,—never fear,
Mister Clive, for—though a clerk—you bore
yourself—suppose we say—
Just as would beseem a soldier!'

" 'Gentlemen, attention—pray!
First, one word!'

"I passed each speaker sever-
ally in review.

When I had precise their number, names and
styles, and fully knew
Over whom my supervision thenceforth must
extend,—why, then——

" 'Some five minutes since, my life lay—as you
all saw, gentlemen—
At the mercy of your friend there. Not a sin-
gle voice was raised
In arrest of judgment, not one tongue—before
my powder blazed—
Ventured "Can it be the youngster blundered,
really seemed to mark
Some irregular proceeding? We conjecture in
the dark,
Guess at random,—still, for sake of fair play
—what if for a freak,
In a fit of absence,—such things have been!—
if our friend proved weak
—What's the phrase? — corrected fortune!
Look into the case, at least!"
Who dared interpose between the altar's vic-
tim and the priest?
Yet he spared me! You eleven! Whosoever,
all or each,
To the disadvantage of the man who spared
me, utters speech
—To his face, behind his back,—that speaker
has to do with me:

Me who promise, if positions change and mine
the chance should be,
Not to imitate your friend and waive ad-
vantage!'

"Twenty-five
Years ago this matter happened: and 'tis cer-
tain," added Clive,
"Never, to my knowledge, did Sir Cocky have
a single breath
Breathed against him: lips were closed through-
out his life, or since his death,
For if he be dead or living I can tell no more
than you.
All I know is—Cocky had one chance more;
how he used it,—grew
Out of such unlucky habits, or relapsed, and
back again
Brought the late-ejected devil with a score
more in his train,—
That's for you to judge. Reprieval I procured,
at any rate.
Ugh—the memory of that minute's fear makes
gooseflesh rise! Why prate
Longer? You've my story, there's your in-
stance: fear I did, you see!"

"Well"—I hardly kept from laughing—"if I
see it, thanks must be

Wholly to your Lordship's candour. Not that
—in a common case—
When a bully caught at cheating thrusts a pistol in one's face,
I should underrate, believe me, such a trial to the nerve!
'Tis no joke, at one-and-twenty, for a youth to stand nor swerve.
Fear I naturally look for—unless, of all men alive,
I am forced to make exception when I come to Robert Clive.
Since at Arcot, Plassy, elsewhere, he and death
—the whole world knows—
Came to somewhat closer quarters."

Quarters? Had we come to blows,
Clive and I, you had not wondered—up he sprang so, out he rapped
Such a round of oaths—no matter! I'll endeavor to adapt
To our modern usage words he—well, 'twas friendly licence—flung
At me like so many fire-balls, fast as he could wag his tongue.

"You—a soldier? You—at Plassy? Yours the faculty to nick
Instantaneously occasion when your foe, if lightning-quick,

—At his mercy, at his malice,—has you, through some stupid inch
Undefended in your bulwark? Thus laid open, —not to flinch
—That needs courage, you'll concede me. Then, look here! Suppose the man,
Checking his advance, his weapon still extended, not a span
Distant from my temple,—curse him!—quietly had bade me 'There!
Keep your life, calumniator!—worthless life I freely spare:
Mine you freely would have taken—murdered me and my good fame
Both at once—and all the better! Go, and thank your own bad aim
Which permits me to forgive you! What if, with such words as these,
He had cast away his weapon? How should I have borne me, please?
Nay, I'll spare you pains and tell you. This, and only this, remained—
Pick his weapon up and use it on myself. I so had gained
Sleep the earlier, leaving England probably to pay on still
Rent and taxes for half India, tenant at the Frenchman's will."

"Such the turn," said I, "the matter takes with you? Then I abate
—No, by not one jot nor tittle,—of your act my estimate.
Fear—I wish I could detect there: courage fronts me, plain enough—
Call it desperation, madness—never mind! for here's in rough
Why, had mine been such a trial, fear had overcome disgrace.
True, disgrace were hard to bear: but such a rush against God's face
—None of that for me. Lord Plassy, since I go to church at times,
Say the creed my mother taught me! Many years in foreign climes
Rub some marks away—not all, though! We poor sinners reach life's brink,
Overlook what rolls beneath it, recklessly enough, but think
There's advantage in what's left us—ground to stand on, time to call
'Lord, have mercy!' ere we topple over—do not leap, that's all!"
Oh, he made no answer,—re-absorbed into his cloud. I caught
Something like "Yes—courage: only fools will call it fear."

If aught

Comfort you, my great unhappy hero Clive, in that I heard,
Next week, how your own hand dealt you doom, and uttered just the word
"Fearfully courageous!"—this, be sure, and nothing else I groaned.
I'm no Clive, nor parson either: Clive's worst deed—we'll hope condoned.

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

MORNING, evening, noon, and night,
"Praise God!" sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,
Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he labored, long and well;
O'er his work the boy's curls fell.

But ever, at each period,
He stopped and sang, "Praise God!"

Then back again his curls he threw,
And cheerful turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk, "Well done;
I doubt not thou art heard, my son:

"As well as if thy voice to-day
Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

"This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome
Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, "Would God that I
Might praise him that great way, and die!"

Night passed, day shone,
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures alway,
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, "Nor day nor night
Now brings the voice of my delight."°

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,
Spread his wings and sank to earth;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,
Lived there, and played the craftsman well;

And morning, evening, noon and night,
Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew:
The man put off the stripling's hue:

The man matured and fell away
Into the season of decay:

And ever o'er the trade he bent,
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will; to him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, "A praise is in mine ear;
There is no doubt in it, no fear:

"So sing old worlds, and so
New worlds that from my footstool go.

"Clearer loves sound other ways:
I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day: he flew to Rome,
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite:

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,
Till on his life the sickness weighed;

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer:

And rising from the sickness drear,
He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the East with praise he turned,
And on his sight the angel burned.

"I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell,
And set thee here; I did not well.

"Vainly I left my angel-sphere,
Vain was thy dream of many a year.

"Thy voice's praise seemed weak; it dropped—
Creation's chorus stopped!

"Go back and praise again
The early way, while I remain.

"With that weak voice of our disdain,
Take up creation's pausing strain.

MEMORABILIA

"Back to the cell and poor employ:
Resume the craftsman and the boy!"

Theocrite grew old at home;
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

One vanished as the other died:
They sought God side by side.

MEMORABILIA

AH, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you,
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems and new!

But you were living before that,
And also you are living after;
And the memory I started at—
My starting moves your laughter!

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
And a certain use in the world, no doubt,
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about:

For there I picked up on the heather,
And there I put inside my breast
A moulted feather, an eagle-feather!
Well, I forget the rest.

PROSPICE

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,

The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

EPILOGUE TO "ASOLANDO"

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
—Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
—Being—who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen° with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!"

"DE GUSTIBUS—"

YOUR ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
(If our loves remain)
In an English lane,
By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
Hark, those two in the hazel coppice—
A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
Making love, say,—
The happier they!
Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,
And let them pass, as they will too soon,

With the beanflower's boon,
And the blackbird's tune,
And May, and June!

What I love best in all the world
Is a castle, precipice-encurled,
In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.
Or look for me, old fellow of mine,
(If I get my head from out the mouth
O' the grave, and loose my spirit's bands,
And come again to the land of lands)—
In a sea-side house to the farther South,
Where the baked cicala° dies of drouth,
And one sharp tree—'tis a cypress—stands,
By the many hundred years red-rusted,
Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'ercrusted,
My sentinel to guard the sands
To the water's edge. For, what expands
Before the house, but the great opaque
Blue breadth of sea without a break?
While, in the house, forever crumbles
Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.
A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles
Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,
And says there's news to-day—the king
Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,
Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling:
—She hopes they have not caught the felons.
Italy, my Italy!

Queen Mary's saying serves for me—
(When fortune's malice
Lost her, Calais)
Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it, "Italy."
Such lovers old are I and she:
So it always was, so shall ever be!

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

THAT second time they hunted me
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
And Austria, hounding far and wide
Her blood-hounds through the country-side,
Breathed hot an instant on my trace,—
I made six days a hiding-place
Of that dry green old aqueduct
Where I and Charles,° when boys, have plucked
The fire-flies from the roof above,
Bright creeping through the moss they love:
—How long it seems since Charles was lost!
Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed
The country in my very sight;
And when that peril ceased at night,
The sky broke out in red dismay
With signal-fires. Well, there I lay
Close covered o'er in my recess,
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
Thinking on Metternich° our friend,

And Charles's miserable end,
And much beside, two days; the third,
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
The peasants from the village go
To work among the maize; you know,
With us in Lombardy,° they bring
Provisions packed on mules, a string
With little bells that cheer their task,
And casks, and boughs on every cask
To keep the sun's heat from the wine;
These I let pass in jingling line,
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
The peasants from the village, too;
For at the very rear would troop
Their wives and sisters in a group
To help, I knew. When these had passed,
I threw my glove to strike the last,
Taking the chance: she did not start,
Much less cry out, but stooped apart,
One instant rapidly glanced round,
And saw me beckon from the ground;
A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;
She picked my glove up while she stripped
A branch off, then rejoined the rest
With that; my glove lay in her breast.
Then I drew breath; they disappeared:
It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
Exactly where my glove was thrown.

Meanwhile came many thoughts; on me
Rested the hopes of Italy.
I had devised a certain tale
Which, when 'twas told her, could not fail
Persuade a peasant of its truth;
I meant to call a freak of youth
This hiding, and give hopes of pay,
And no temptation to betray.
But when I saw that woman's face,
Its calm simplicity of grace,
Our Italy's own attitude
In which she walked thus far, and stood,
Planting each naked foot so firm,
To crush the snake and spare the worm—
At first sight of her eyes, I said,
"I am that man upon whose head
They fixed the price, because I hate
The Austrians over us: the State
Will give you gold—oh, gold so much!—
If you betray me to their clutch,
And be your death, for aught I know,
If once they find you saved their foe.
Now, you must bring me food and drink,
And also paper, pen and ink,
And carry safe what I shall write
To Padua, which you'll reach at night
Before the duomo shuts; go in,
And wait till Tenebræ° begin;
Walk to the third confessional,
Between the pillar and the wall,

And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace?*
Say it a second time, then cease;
And if the voice inside returns,
From Christ and Freedom; what concerns
The cause of Peace?—for answer, slip
My letter where you placed your lip;
Then come back happy we have done
Our mother service—I, the son,
As you the daughter of our land!"

Three mornings more, she took her stand
In the same place, with the same eyes:
I was no surer of sunrise
Than of her coming. We conferred
Of her own prospects, and I heard
She had a lover—stout and tall,
She said—then let her eyelids fall,
"He could do much"—as if some doubt
Entered her heart,—then, passing out,
"She could not speak for others, who
Had other thoughts; herself she knew:"
And so she brought me drink and food.
After four days, the scouts pursued
Another path; at last arrived
The help my Paduan friends contrived
To furnish me: she brought the news.
For the first time I could not choose
But kiss her hand, and lay my own
Upon her head—"This faith was shown

To Italy, our mother; she
Uses my hand and blesses thee."
She followed down to the sea-shore;
I left and never saw her more.

How very long since I have thought
Concerning—much less wished for—aught
Beside the good of Italy,
For which I live and mean to die!
I never was in love; and since
Charles proved false, what shall now convince
My inmost heart I have a friend?
However, if I pleased to spend
Real wishes on myself—say, three—
I know at least what one should be.
I would grasp Metternich until
I felt his red wet throat distil
In blood through these two hands. And next,
—Nor much for that am I perplexed—
Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,
Should die slow of a broken heart
Under his new employers. Last
—Ah, there, what should I wish? For fast
Do I grow old and out of strength.
If I resolved to seek at length
My father's house again, how scared
They all would look, and unprepared!
My brothers live in Austria's pay
—Disowned me long ago, men say;

And all my early mates who used
To praise me so—perhaps induced
More than one early step of mine—
Are turning wise: while some opine
"Freedom grows license," some suspect
"Haste breeds delay," and recollect
They always said, such premature
Beginnings never could endure!
So, with a sullen "All's for best,"
The land seems settling to its rest.
I think then, I should wish to stand
This evening in that dear, lost land,
Over the sea the thousand miles,
And know if yet that woman smiles,
With the calm smile; some little farm
She lives in there, no doubt: what harm
If I sat on the door-side bench,
And, while her spindle made a trench
Fantastically in the dust,
Inquired of all her fortunes—just
Her children's ages and their names,
And what may be the husband's aims
For each of them. I'd talk this out,
And sit there, for an hour about,
Then kiss her hand once more, and lay
Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing—how
It steals the time! To business now.

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

THAT'S my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's° hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had

A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without

Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together.° There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck° cast in bronze for me!

THE GLOVE

(PETER RONSARD° *loquitur.*)

"HEIGHO!" yawned one day King Francis,
"Distance all value enhances!
"When a man's busy, why, leisure
"Strikes him as wonderful pleasure:
"'Faith, and at leisure once is he?
"Straightway he wants to be busy.
"Here we've got peace; and aghast I'm
"Caught thinking war the true pastime.
"Is there a reason in metre?

"Give us your speech, master Peter!"
I who, if mortal dare say so,
Ne'er am at loss with my Naso,°
"Sire," I replied, "joys prove cloudlets:
"Men are the merest Ixions"—
Here the King whistled aloud, "Let's
"—Heigho—go look at our lions!
Such are the sorrowful chances
If you talk fine to King Francis.

And so, to the courtyard proceeding
Our company, Francis was leading,
Increased by new followers tenfold;
Before he arrived at the penfold;
Lords, ladies, like clouds which bedizen
At sunset the western horizon.
And Sir De Lorge pressed 'mid the foremost
With the dame he professed to adore most.
Oh, what a face! One by fits eyed
Here, and the horrible pitside;
For the penfold surrounded a hollow
Which led where the eye scarce dared follow,
And shelved to the chamber secluded
Where Bluebeard, the great lion, brooded.
The King hailed his keeper, an Arab
As glossy and black as a scarab,°
And bade him make sport and at once stir
Up and out of his den the old monster.
They opened a hole in the wire-work

Across it, and dropped there a firework,
And fled: one's heart's beating redoubled;
A pause, while the pit's mouth was troubled,
The blackness and silence so utter,
By the firework's slow sparkling and sputter;
The earth in a sudden contortion
Gave out to our gaze her abortion.
Such a brute! Were I friend Clement Marot°
(Whose experience of nature's but narrow,
And whose faculties move in no small mist
When he versifies David the Psalmist)
I should study that brute to describe you
Illum Juda Leonem de Tribu.°
One's whole blood grew curdling and creepy
To see the black mane, vast and heapy,
The tail in the air stiff and straining,
The wide eyes, nor waxing nor waning,
As over the barrier which bounded
His platform, and us who surrounded
The barrier, they reached and they rested
On space that might stand him in best stead:
For who knew, he thought, what the amazement,
The eruption of clatter and blaze meant,
And if, in this minute of wonder,
No outlet, 'mid lightning and thunder,
Lay broad, and, his shackles all shivered,
The lion at last was delivered?
Ay, that was, the open sky o'erhead!

And you saw by the flash on his forehead,
By the hope in those eyes wide and steady,
He was leagues in the desert already,
Driving the flocks up the mountain,
Or catlike couched hard by the fountain,
To waylay the date-gathering negress:
So guarded he entrance or egress.
"How he stands!" quoth the King: "we may well swear,
("No novice, we've won our spurs elsewhere
"And so can afford the confession,)
"We exercise wholesome discretion
"In keeping aloof from his threshold;
"Once hold you, those jaws want no fresh hold,
"Their first would too pleasantly purloin
"The visitor's brisket or surloin:
"But who's he would prove so fool-hardy?
"Not the best man of Marignan, pardie!"

The sentence no sooner was uttered,
Than over the rails a glove fluttered,
Fell close to the lion, and rested:
The dame 'twas, who flung it and jested
With life so, De Lorge had been wooing
For months past; he sat there pursuing
His suit, weighing out with nonchalance
Fine speeches like gold from a balance.
Sound the trumpet, no true knight's a tarrier!
De Lorge made one leap at the barrier,
Walked straight to the glove,—while the lion

Ne'er moved, kept his far-reaching eye on
The palm-tree-edged desert-spring's sapphire.
And the musky oiled skin of the Kaffir,—
Picked it up, and as calmly retreated,
Leaped back where the lady was seated,
And full in the face of its owner
Flung the glove.

"Your heart's queen, you dethrone her?
"So should I!"—cried the King—"'twas mere vanity.
Not love, set that task to humanity!"
Lords and ladies alike turned with loathing
From such a proved wolf in sheep's clothing.

Not so, I: for I caught an expression
In her brow's undisturbed self-possession
Amid the Court's scoffing and merriment—
As if from no pleasing experiment
She rose, yet of pain not much heedful
So long as the process was needful.—
As if she had tried in a crucible,
To what "speeches like gold" were reducible,
And, finding the finest prove copper,
Felt the smoke in her face was but proper:
To know what she had *not* to trust to,
Was worth all the ashes and dust too.
She went out 'mid hooting and laughter:
Clement Marot stayed: I followed after,

And asked, as a grace, what it all meant?
If she wished not the rash deed's recalment?
"For I"—so I spoke—"am a poet:
"Human nature,—behoves that I know it!"

She told me, "Too long had I heard
"Of the deed proved alone by the word:
"For my love—what De Lorge would not dare!
"With my scorn—what De Lorge could compare!
"And the endless descriptions of death
"He would brave when my lip formed a breath,
"I must reckon as braved, or, of course,
"Doubt his word—and moreover, perforce,
"For such gifts as no lady could spurn,
"Must offer my love in return.
"When I looked on your lion, it brought
"All the dangers at once to my thought,
"Encountered by all sorts of men,
"Before he was lodged in his den,—
"From the poor slave whose club or bare hands
"Dug the trap, set the snare on the sands,
"With no King and no Court to applaud,
"By no shame, should he shrink, over-awed,
"Yet to capture the creature made shift
"That his rude boys might laugh at the gift,
"—To the page who last leaped o'er the fence

"Of the pit, on no greater pretence
"Than to get back the bonnet he dropped,
"Lest his pay for a week should be stopped.
"So, wiser I judged it to make
"One trial what 'death for my sake'
"Really meant, while the power was yet mine,
"Than to wait until time should define
"Such a phrase not so simply as I,
"Who took it to mean just 'to die.'
"The blow a glove gives is but weak:
"Does the mark yet discolour my cheek?
"But when the heart suffers a blow,
"Will the pain pass so soon, do you know?"

I looked, as away she was sweeping.
And saw a youth eagerly keeping
As close as he dared to the doorway.
No doubt that a noble should more weigh
His life than befits a plebeian;
And yet, had our brute been Nemean—
(I judge by a certain calm fervour
The youth stepped with, forward to serve her)
—He'd have scarce thought you did him the worst turn
If you whispered "Friend, what you'd get, first earn!"
And when, shortly after, she carried
Her shame from the Court, and they married,
To that marriage some happiness, maugre
The voice of the Court, I dared augur.

For De Lorge, he made women with men vie,
Those in wonder and praise, these in envy;
And in short stood so plain a head taller
That he wooed and won . . . how do you call
her?
The beauty, that rose in the sequel
To the King's love, who loved her a week well.
And 'twas noticed he never would honour
De Lorge (who looked daggers upon her)
With the easy commission of stretching
His legs in the service, and fetching
His wife, from her chamber, those straying
Sad gloves she was always mislaying,
While the King took the closet to chat in,—
But of course this adventure came pat in.
And never the King told the story
How bringing a glove brought such glory,
But the wife smiled—"His nerves are grown
firmer:
"Mine he brings now and utters no murmur."

Venienti occurrite morbo!°
With which moral I drop my theorbo.°

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH

ROME, 15—

VANITY, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?

Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not!
Well—She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf° envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
—Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk:
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,

And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble° all the rare,-the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,°
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my church
—What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not, I! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,°
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,°
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati° villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!

Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod,° thyrsus,° with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,

Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's° every
word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian° serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can
point,
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work:
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange
thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT° quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope

My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a visor and a Term,°
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
"Do I live; am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! stone—
Gritstone, a-crumble! clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—
And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
—Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf—at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

THE LABORATORY

ANCIEN RÉGIME

Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly,
May gaze through these faint smokes curling whitely,
As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's-smithy—
Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?

He is with her, and they know that I know
Where they are, what they do: they believe my tears flow
While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear
Empty church, to pray God in, for them!—I am here.

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,
Pound at thy powder,—I am not in haste!
Better sit thus, and observe thy strange things,
Than go where men wait me and dance at the King's.

That in the mortar—you call it a gum?
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come!
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue,
Sure to taste sweetly,—is that poison too?

Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures
What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures!
To carry pure death in an earring, a casket,
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree basket!

Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge to give,
And Pauline should have just thirty minutes to live!
But to light a pastille, and Elise, with her head
And her breast and her arms and her hands, should drop dead!

Quick—is it finished? The color's too grim!
Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim?
Let it brighten her drink, let her turn it and stir,
And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer!

What a drop! She's not little, no minion like me!
That's why she ensnared him: this never will free
The soul from those masculine eyes,—say, "No!"
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.

For only last night, as they whispered, I brought
My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought
Could I keep them one half minute fixed, she would fall

Shrivelled; she fell not; yet this does it all!

Not that I bid you spare her the pain;
Let death be felt and the proof remain:
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace—
He is sure to remember her dying face!

Is it done? Take my mask off! Nay, be not morose;
It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close:
The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee!
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill,
You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will!
But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings
Ere I know it—next moment I dance at the King's!

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,

While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!
And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

UP AT A VILLA— DOWN IN THE CITY

(As distinguished by an Italian person of quality)

HAD I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,

The house for me, no doubt, were a house in
the city-square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the
window there!
Something to see, by Bacchus,° something to
hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a per-
fect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no
more than a beast.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn
of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the crea-
ture's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf
to pull!
—I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the
hair's turned wool.

But the city, oh the city—the square with the
houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's
some thing to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front
awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saun-
ters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw
when the sun gets high;

And the shops with fanciful signs which are
painted properly.

What of a villa? Though winter be over in
March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have
withered well off the heights:
You've the brown ploughed land before, where
the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint
gray olive-trees.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer
all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong
April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce
risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its
great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the chil-
dren to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain
to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine
such foam-bows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that
prance and paddle and pash

Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem atingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons,—I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in:
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello°-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.

At the post-office such a scene-picture—the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is Dante,° Boccaccio,° Petrarca,° St. Jerome,° and Cicero,°
"And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhyming), "the skirts of St. Paul has reached,°
Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he preached."
Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession! our Lady° borne smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords° stuck in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still: it's the greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear—it's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate

It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for
me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still—
ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the
monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts,
a-holding the yellow candles;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another
a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for
the better prevention of scandals:
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-*
tootle the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such
pleasure in life!

A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S

Oh Galuppi,° Baldassare, this is very sad to
find!
I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove
me deaf and blind;
But although I take your meaning, 'tis with
such a heavy mind!

Here you come with your old music, and here's
all the good it brings.
What, they lived once thus at Venice where the
merchants were the kings,

Where St. Mark's° is, where the Doges used
to wed the sea with rings°?

Ay, because the sea's the street there; and 'tis
arched by . . . what you call
. . . Shylock's bridge° with houses on it, where
they kept the carnival:
I was never out of England—it's as if I saw
it all.

Did young people take their pleasure when the
sea was warm in May?
Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning
ever to mid-day,
When they make up fresh adventures for the
morrow, do you say?

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and
lips so red,—
On her neck the small face buoyant, like a
bell-flower on its bed,
O'er the breast's superb abundance where a
man might base his head?

Well, and it was graceful of them—they'd
break talk off and afford
—She, to bite her mask's black velvet—he, to
finger on his sword,
While you sat and played Toccatas, stately at
the clavichord°?

A Toccata of Galuppi's

What? Those lesser thirds° so plaintive, sixths° diminished, sigh on sigh,
Told them something? Those suspensions,° those solutions°—"Must we die?"
Those commiserating sevenths°—"Life might last! we can but try!"

"Were you happy?"—"Yes."—"And are you still as happy?"—"Yes. And you?"
—"Then, more kisses!"—"Did *I* stop them, when a million seemed so few?"
Hark, the dominant's persistence till it must be answered to!

So, an octave struck the answer. Oh, they praised you, I dare say!
"Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at grave and gay!
I can always leave off talking when I hear a master play!"

Then they left you for their pleasure: till in due time, one by one,
Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as well undone,
Death stepped tacitly and took them where they never see the sun.°

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my stand nor swerve,

While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from nature's close reserve,
In you come with your cold music till I creep through every nerve.

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a house was burned:
"Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent what Venice earned.
The soul, doubtless, is immortal—where a soul can be discerned

"Yours, for instance: you know physics, something of geology,
Mathematics are your pastime; souls shall rise in their degree;
Butterflies may dread extinction,—you'll not die, it cannot be!°

"As for Venice and her people, merely born to bloom and drop,
Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly were the crop:
What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had to stop?

"Dust and ashes!" So you creak it, and I want the heart to scold.
Dear dead women, with such hair, too—what's become of all the gold

Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel
chilly and grown old.

GOLD HAIR

A STORY OF PORNIC

Oh, the beautiful girl, too white,
Who lived at Pornic, down by the sea,
Just where the sea and the Loire unite!
And a boasted name in Brittany
She bore, which I will not write.

Too white, for the flower of life is red;
Her flesh was the soft seraphic screen
Of a soul that is meant (her parents said)
To just see earth, and hardly be seen,
And blossom in heaven instead.

Yet earth saw one thing, one how fair!
One grace that grew to its full on earth:
Smiles might be sparse on her cheek so spare,
And her waist want half a girdle's girth,
But she had her great gold hair.

Hair, such a wonder of flix and floss,°
Freshness and fragrance—floods of it, too!
Gold, did I say? Nay, gold's mere dross:
Here, Life smiled, "Think what I meant to
do!"
And Love sighed, "Fancy my loss!"

So, when she died, it was scarce more strange
  Than that, when delicate evening dies,
And you follow its spent sun's pallid range,
  There's a shoot of colour startles the skies
With sudden, violent change,—

That, while the breath was nearly to seek,
  As they put the little cross to her lips,
She changed; a spot came out on her cheek,
  A spark from her eye in mid-eclipse,
And she broke forth, "I must speak!"

"Not my hair!" made the girl her moan—
  "All the rest is gone or to go;
"But the last, last grace, my all, my own,
  "Let it stay in the grave, that the ghosts
      may know!
"Leave my poor gold hair alone!"

The passion thus vented, dead lay she;
  Her parents sobbed their worst on that;
All friends joined in, nor observed degree:
  For indeed the hair was to wonder at,
As it spread—not flowing free,

But curled around her brow, like a crown,
  And coiled beside her cheeks, like a cap,
And calmed about her neck—ay, down
  To her breast, pressed flat, without a gap
I' the gold, it reached her gown.

All kissed that face, like a silver wedge
'Mid the yellow wealth, nor disturbed its hair:
E'en the priest allowed death's privilege,
As he planted the crucifix with care
On her breast, 'twixt edge and edge.

And thus was she buried, inviolate
Of body and soul, in the very space
By the altar; keeping saintly state
In Pornic church, for her pride of race,
Pure life and piteous fate.

And in after-time would your fresh tear fall,
Though your mouth might twitch with a dubious smile,
As they told you of gold, both robe and pall,
How she prayed them leave it alone awhile,
So it never was touched at all.

Years flew; this legend grew at last
The life of the lady; all she had done,
All been, in the memories fading fast
Of lover and friend, was summed in one
Sentence survivors passed:

To wit, she was meant for heaven, not earth;
Had turned an angel before the time:
Yet, since she was mortal, in such dearth

Of frailty, all you could count a crime
Was—she knew her gold hair's worth.

At little pleasant Pornic church,
It chanced, the pavement wanted repair,
Was taken to pieces: left in the lurch,°
A certain sacred space lay bare,
And the boys began research.

'Twas the space where our sires would lay a saint,
A benefactor,—a bishop, suppose,
A baron with armour-adornments quaint,
Dame with chased ring and jewelled rose,
Things sanctity saves from taint;

So we come to find them in after-days
When the corpse is presumed to have done with gauds
Of use to the living, in many ways:
For the boys get pelf, and the town applauds,
And the church deserves the praise.

They grubbed with a will: and at length—*O cor*
Humanum, pectora cæca,° and the rest!—
They found—no gaud they were prying for,

No ring, no rose, but—who would have
guessed?—
A double Louis-d'or!°

Here was a case for the priest: he heard,
Marked, inwardly digested, laid
Finger on nose, smiled, "There's a bird
"Chirps in my ear": then, "Bring a spade,
"Dig deeper!"—he gave the word.

And lo, when they came to the coffin-lid,
Or rotten planks which composed it once,
Why, there lay the girl's skull wedged amid
A mint of money, it served for the nonce
To hold in its hair-heaps hid!

Hid there? Why? Could the girl be wont
(She the stainless soul) to treasure up
Money, earth's trash and heaven's affront?
Had a spider found out the communion-cup,
Was a toad in the christening-font?

Truth is truth: too true it was.
Gold! She hoarded and hugged it first,
Longed for it, leaned o'er it, loved it—alas—
Till the humour grew to a head and burst,
And she cried, at the final pass,—

"Talk not of God, my heart is stone!
"Nor lover nor friend—be gold for both!

"Gold I lack; and, my all, my own,
"It shall hide in my hair. I scarce die loth
"If they let my hair alone!"

Louis-d'or, some six times five,
And duly double, every piece.
Now do you see? With the priest to shrive,
With parents preventing her soul's release
By kisses that kept alive,—

With heaven's gold gates about to ope,
With friends' praise, gold-like, lingering still,
An instinct had bidden the girl's hand grope
For gold, the true sort—"Gold in heaven, if you will;
"But I keep earth's too, I hope."

Enough! The priest took the grave's grim yield:
The parents, they eyed that price of sin
As if *thirty pieces*° lay revealed
On the place *to bury strangers in*,
The hideous Potter's Field.°

But the priest bethought him: "'Milk that's spilt'
"—You know the adage! Watch and pray!
"Saints tumble to earth with so slight a tilt!

"It would build a new altar; that, we may!"
And the altar therewith was built.

Why I deliver this horrible verse?
As the text of a sermon, which now I preach:
Evil or good may be better or worse
In the human heart, but the mixture of each
Is a marvel and a curse.

The candid incline to surmise of late
That the Christian faith proves false, I find;
For our Essays-and-Reviews' debate
Begins to tell on the public mind,
And Colenso's words° have weight:

I still, to suppose it true, for my part,
See reasons and reasons; this, to begin
'Tis the faith that launched point-blank her dart
At the head of a lie—taught Original Sin,
The Corruption of Man's heart.

ABT VOGLER

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZING UPON THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION)

WOULD that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,

Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,
Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when Solomon° willed
Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,
Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end and of aim,
Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-deep removed,—
Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable Name,
And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess he loved!

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building° of mine,
This which my keys in a crowd pressed and importuned to raise!
Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now and now combine,
Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his praise!
And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge down to hell,
Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of things,
Then up again swim into sight, having based me my palace well,

Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the
nether springs.

And another would mount and march, like the
excellent minion he was,
Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but
with many a crest,
Raising my rampired walls of gold as trans-
parent as glass,
Eager to do and die, yield each his place to
the rest:
For higher still and higher (as a runner tips
with fire,
When a great illumination surprises a festal
night—
Outlined round and round Rome's dome° from
space to spire)
Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the
pride of my soul was in sight.

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was cer-
tain, to match man's birth,
Nature in turn conceived, obeying an im-
pulse as I;
And the emulous heaven yearned down, made
effort to reach the earth,
As the earth had done her best, in my pas-
sion, to scale the sky:
Novel splendors burst forth, grew familiar and
dwelt with mine,

Not a point nor peak but found and fixed its wandering star;
Meteor-moons, balls of blaze: and they did not pale nor pine,
For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more near nor far.

Nay more; for there wanted not who walked in the glare and glow,
Presences plain in the place; or, fresh from the Protoplast,
Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind should blow,
Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their liking at last;
Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through the body and gone,
But were back once more to breathe in an old world worth their new:
What never had been, was now; what was, as it shall be anon;
And what is,—shall I say, matched both? for I was made perfect too.

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish of my soul,
All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed visibly forth,
All through music and me! For think, had I painted the whole,

Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonder-worth:
Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect proceeds from cause,
Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale is told;
It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list enrolled:—

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are!
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star.
Consider it well: each tone of our scale in itself is naught:
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is said:
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my thought:
And there! Ye have heard and seen: consider and bow the head!

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I reared;

Gone! and the good tears start, the praises
that come too slow;
For one is assured at first, one scarce can say
thing was to go.
That he even gave it a thought, the gone
thing was to go.
Never to be again! But many more of the kind
As good, nay, better perchance: is this your
comfort to me?
To me, who must be saved because I cling
with my mind
To the same, same self, same love, same
God: ay, what was, shall be.

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the in-
effable Name?
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made
with hands!
What, have fear of change from thee who art
ever the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that
thy power expands?
There shall never be one lost good! What was,
shall live as before;
The evil is null, is naught, is silence imply-
ing sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil,
so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven
a perfect round.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear it by and by.

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered or agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized?
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe:

But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians know.

Well, it is earth with me; silence resumes her reign:
I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.
Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,
Sliding by semitones till I sink to the minor, —yes,
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into the deep;
Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-place is found,
The C Major of this life: so, now I will try to sleep.

RABBI BEN EZRA

GROW old along with me°!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,

Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor
be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!

A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of° God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I must
believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never
grudge the throe!

For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink
i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want
play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone
way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good to live and learn?"

Not once beat "Praise be thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now Love perfect too:
Perfect I call thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what thou shalt do!"

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,

Let us cry "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than
flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its
term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though in
the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being
old.

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts

The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face, now I have proved the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named° here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I,° the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,

The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount°:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,°
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou forsooth, would fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press°?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress°?

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,

The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips a-glow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst
thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake thy
thirst:

So, take and use thy work:
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past
the aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete
the same!

"ALKESTIS"

(FROM "BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE")

When God Apollon° took, for punishment,
A mortal form and sold himself a slave
To King Admetos till a term should end,—

Not only did he make, in servitude,
Such music, while he fed the flocks and herds,
As saved the pasturage from wrong or fright,
Curing rough creatures of ungentleness:
Much more did that melodious wisdom work
Within the heart o' the master: there, ran wild
Many a lust and greed that grow to strength
By preying on the native pity and care,
Would else, all undisturbed, possess the land.

And these, the God so tamed, with golden tongue,
That, in the plenitude of youth and power,
Admetos vowed himself to rule thenceforth
In Pherai solely for his people's sake,
Subduing to such end each lust and greed
That dominates the natural charity.

And so the struggle ended. Right ruled might:
And soft yet brave, and good yet wise, the man
Stood up to be a monarch; having learned
The worth of life, life's worth would he bestow
On all whose lot was cast, to live or die,
As he determined for the multitude.
So stands a statue: pedestalled sublime,
Only that it may wave the thunder off,
And ward, from winds that vex, a world below.

And then,—as if a whisper found its way
E'en to the sense o' the marble,—"Vain thy vow!
The royalty of its resolve, that head
Shall hide within the dust ere day be done:
That arm, its outstretch of beneficence,
Shall have a speedy ending on the earth:
Lie patient, prone, while light some cricket leaps
And takes possession of the masterpiece,
To sit, sing louder as more near the sun.
For why? A flaw was in the pedestal;
Who knows? A worm's work! Sapped, the certain fate
O' the statue is to fall, and thine to die!"

Whereat the monarch, calm, addressed himself
To die, but bitterly the soul outbroke—
"O prodigality of life, blind waste
I' the world, of power profuse without the will
To make life do its work, deserve its day!
My ancestors pursued their pleasure, poured
The blood o' the people out in idle war,
Or took occasion of some weary peace
To bid men dig down deep or build up high,
Spend bone and marrow that the king might feast
Entrenched and buttressed from the vulgar gaze.

Yet they all lived, nay, lingered to old age:
As though Zeus° loved that they should laugh to scorn
The vanity of seeking other ends
In rule than just the ruler's pastime. They
Lived; I must die."
And, as some long last moan
Of a minor suddenly is propped beneath
By note which, new-struck, turns the wail, that was,
Into a wonder and a triumph, so
Began Alkestis: "Nay, thou art to live!
The glory that, in the disguise of flesh,
Was helpful to our house,—he prophesied
The coming fate: whereon, I pleaded sore
That he,—I guessed a God, who to his couch
Amid the clouds must go and come again,
While we were darkling,—since he loved us both,
He should permit thee, at whatever price,
To live and carry out to heart's content
Soul's purpose, turn each thought to very deed,
Nor let Zeus lose the monarch meant in thee."

"To which Apollon, with a sunset smile,
Sadly—'And so should mortals arbitrate!
It were unseemly if they aped us Gods,
And, mindful of our chain of consequence,
Lost care of the immediate earthly link:
Forwent the comfort of life's little hour,

In prospect of some cold abysmal blank
Alien eternity,—unlike the time
They know, and understand to practise with,--
No,—our eternity—no heart's blood, bright
And warm outpoured in its behoof, would tinge
Never so palely, warm a whit the more:
Whereas retained and treasured—left to beat
Joyously on, a life's length, in the breast
O' the loved and loving—it would throb itself
Through, and suffuse the earthly tenement,
Transform it, even as your mansion here
Is love-transformed into a temple-home
Where I, a God, forget the Olumpian glow,
I' the feel of human richness like the rose:
Your hopes and fears, so blind and yet so sweet
With death about them. Therefore, well in thee
To look, not on eternity, but time:
To apprehend that, should Admetos die,
All, we Gods purposed in him, dies as sure:
That, life's link snapping, all our chain is lost.
And yet a mortal glance might pierce, methinks,
Deeper into the seeming dark of things,
And learn, no fruit, man's life can bear, will fade:
Learn, if Admetos die now, so much more

Will pity for the frailness found in flesh,
Will terror at the earthly chance and change
Frustrating wisest scheme of noblest soul,
Will these go wake the seeds of good asleep
Throughout the world: as oft a rough wind sheds
The unripe promise of some field-flower,—true!
But loosens to the level, and lets breathe
A thousand captives for the year to come.
Nevertheless, obtain thy prayer, stay fate!
Admetos lives—if thou wilt die for him!"

"So was the pact concluded that I die,
And thou live on, live for thyself, for me,
For all the world. Embrace and bid me hail,
Husband, because I have the victory—
Am, heart, soul, head to foot, one happiness!"

Whereto Admetos, in a passionate cry,
"Never, by that true word Apollon spoke!
All the unwise wish is unwished, oh wife!
Let purposes of Zeus fulfil themselves,
If not through me, then through some other man!
Still, in myself he had a purpose too,
Inalienably mine, to end with me:
This purpose—that, throughout my earthly life,
Mine should be mingled and made up with thine,—

And we two prove one force and play one part
And do one thing. Since death divides the pair,
'Tis well that I depart and thou remain
Who wast to me as spirit is to flesh:
Let the flesh perish, be perceived no more,
So thou, the spirit that informed the flesh,
Bend yet awhile, a very flame above
The rift I drop into the darkness by,—
And bid remember, flesh and spirit once
Worked in the world, one body, for man's sake.
Never be that abominable show
Of passive death without a quickening life—
Admetos only, no Alkestis now!"

Then she: "O thou Admetos, must the pile
Of truth on truth, which needs but one truth more
To tower up in completeness, trophy-like,
Emprize of man, and triumph of the world,
Must it go ever to the ground again
Because of some faint heart or faltering hand,
Which we, that breathless world about the base,
Trusted should carry safe to altitude,
Superimpose o' the summit, our supreme
Achievement, our victorious coping-stone?
Shall thine, Beloved, prove the hand and heart
That fail again, flinch backward at the truth

Would cap and crown the structure this last time,—
Precipitate our monumental hope
And strew the earth ignobly yet once more?
See how, truth piled on truth, the structure wants,
Waits just the crowning truth I claim of thee!
Wouldst thou, for any joy to be enjoyed,
For any sorrow that thou mightst escape,
Unwill thy will to reign a righteous king?
Nowise! And were there two lots, death and life,—
Life, wherein good resolve should go to air,
Death, whereby finest fancy grew plain fact
I' the reign of thy survivor,—life or death?
Certainly death, thou choosest. Here stand I
The wedded, the beloved one: hadst thou loved
Her who less worthily could estimate
Both life and death than thou? Not so should say
Admetos, whom Apollon made come court
Alkestis in a car, submissive brutes
Of blood were yoked to, symbolising soul
Must dominate unruly sense in man.
Then, shall Admetos and Alkestis see
Good alike, and alike choose, each for each,
Good,—and yet, each for other, at the last
Choose evil? What? thou soundest in my soul
To depths below the deepest, reachest good
In evil, that makes evil good again,

And so allottest to me that I live
And not die—letting die, not thee alone,
But all true life that lived in both of us?
Look at me once ere thou decree.the lot!"

Therewith her whole soul entered into his,
He looked the look back, and Alkestis died.

And even while it lay, i' the look of him,
Dead, the dimmed body, bright Alkestis' soul
Had penetrated through the populace
Of ghosts, was got to Koré,—throned and crowned
The pensive queen o' the twilight, where she dwells
Forever in a muse, but half away
From flowery earth she lost and hankers for,—
And there demanded to become a ghost
Before the time.

Whereat the softened eyes
Of the lost maidenhood that lingered still
Straying among the flowers in Sicily,°
Sudden was startled back to Hades' throne
By that demand: broke through humanity
Into the orbed omniscience of a God,
Searched at a glance Alkestis to the soul,
And said—while a long slow sigh lost itself
I' the hard and hollow passage of a laugh:

"Hence, thou deceiver! This is not to die,
If, by the very death which mocks me now,

The life, that's left behind and past my power,
Is formidably doubled. Say, there fight
Two athletes, side by side, each athlete armed
With only half the weapons, and no more,
Adequate to a contest with their foe:
If one of these should fling helm, sword and shield
To fellow — shieldless, swordless, helmless, late—
And so leaped naked o'er the barrier, leave
A combatant equipped from head to heel,
Yet cry to the other side 'Receive a friend
Who fights no longer!' 'Back, friend, to the fray!'
Would be the prompt rebuff; I echo it.
Two souls in one were formidable odds:
Admetos must not be himself and thou!"

And so, before the embrace relaxed a whit,
The lost eyes opened, still beneath the look;
And lo, Alkestis was alive again,
And of Admetos' rapture who shall speak?

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN EUROPE

LET us begin and carry up this corpse,
Singing together.

Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes
Each in its tether
Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
Cared-for till cock-crow:
Look out if yonder be not day again
Rimming the rock-row!
That's the appropriate country; there, man's thought,
Rarer, intenser,
Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
Chafes in the censer.
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;
Seek we sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture!
All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;
Clouds overcome it;
No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
Circling its summit.
Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights:
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life° was the level's and the night's;
He's for the morning.
Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,
'Ware the beholders!
This is our master, famous, calm and dead,
Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft,

Safe from the weather!
He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
Singing together,
He was a man born with thy face and throat,
Lyric Apollo!
Long he lived nameless: how should Spring take note
Winter would follow?
Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!
Cramped and diminished,
Moaned he, "New measures, other feet anon!
My dance is finished?"
No, that's the world's way: (keep the mountain-side,
Make for the city!)
He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
Over men's pity;
Left play for work, and grappled with the world
Bent on escaping°:
"What's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou keepest furled?
Show me their shaping,°
Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage,—
Give!"—So, he gowned him,
Straight got by heart that book to its last page:
Learned, we found him.
Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,
Accents uncertain:

"Time to taste life," another would have said,
"Up with the curtain!"
This man said rather, "Actual life comes next?
Patience a moment!
Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,
Still there's the comment.
Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,
Painful or easy!
Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
Ay, nor feel queasy."
Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
When he had learned it,
When he had gathered all books had to give!
Sooner, he spurned it.
Image the whole, then execute the parts—
Fancy the fabric
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
Ere mortar dab brick!

(Here's the town-gate reached: there's the market-place
Gaping before us.)
Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
(Hearten our chorus!)
That before living he'd learn how to live—
No end to learning:
Earn the means first—God surely will contrive
Use for our earning.
Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes!

Live now or never!"
He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever."
Back to his book then: deeper drooped his head:
Calculus racked him:
Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:
Tussis attacked him.
"Now, master, take a little rest!"—not he!
(Caution redoubled,
Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)
Not a whit troubled,
Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
Fierce as a dragon
He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)
Sucked at the flagon.
Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
Heedless of far gain,°
Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
Bad is our bargain!
Was it not great? did not he throw on God
(He loves the burthen)—
God's task to make the heavenly period
Perfect the earthen?
Did not he magnify the mind, show clear
Just what it all meant?
He would not discount life, as fools do here,
Paid by instalment.
He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success

Found, or earth's failure:
"Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered
"Yes!
Hence with life's pale lure!"
That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit:
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.
That, has the world here—should he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find him.
So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
Ground he at grammar;
Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were rife:
While he could stammer
He settled *Hoti's*° business—let it be!—
Properly based *Oun*°—
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,°
Dead from the waist down.
Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place:
Hail to your purlieus,

All ye highfliers of the feathered race,
Swallows and curlews!
Here's the top-peak; the multitude below
Live, for they can, there:
This man decided not to Live but Know—
Bury this man there?
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects:
Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

(CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER")

BUT do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,

And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him,—but tomorrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,°
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up tomorrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
Tomorrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require:
It saves a model. So! keep looking so—
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
There's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers everything,—

All in a twilight, you and I alike
—You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone you know)—but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now looks the life he makes us lead;
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example—turn your head—
All that's behind us! You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak:
And that cartoon, the second from the door
—It is the thing, Love! so such things should be—
Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.

I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
I do what many dream of all their lives,
—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive—you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter)—so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,

Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word—
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp.
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray,
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain,
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!"
No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbanite who died five years ago.
('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,

Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art — for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right—that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the stretch—
Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael,° I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo°!
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?

What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau°!
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,

ANDREA DEL SARTO

Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know—
'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray:
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was—to reach and stay there; since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife—"
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge

Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)
"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?)
If really there was such a chance, so lost,—
Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?

If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, love,—come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? he waits outside?
Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans?
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly

How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more — the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
What's better and what's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi° for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis!—it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
And I have labored somewhat in my time

And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance.
Yes,
You love me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard,° Rafael, Agnolo, and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS

OR

NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE ISLAND

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."

['WILL sprawl, now that the heat of day is best,
Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin,

And, while he kicks both feet in the cool slush,
And feels about his spine small eft-things course,
Run in and out each arm, and make him laugh:
And while above his head a pompion-plant,
Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,
Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard,
And now a flower drops with a bee inside,
And now a fruit to snap at, catch and crunch,—
He looks out o'er yon sea which sunbeams cross
And recross till they weave a spider-web,
(Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks at times,)
And talks to his own self, howe'er he please,
Touching that other, whom his dam called God.
Because to talk about Him, vexes—ha,
Could He but know! and time to vex is now,
When talk is safer than in winter-time.
Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep
In confidence he drudges at their task,
And it is good to cheat the pair, and gibe,
Letting the rank tongue blossom into speech.]

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!
'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match,
But not the stars; the stars came otherwise;

Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that:
Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon,
And snaky sea which rounds and ends the same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease:
He hated that He cannot change His cold,
Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy fish
That longed to 'scape the rock-stream where she lived,
And thaw herself within the lukewarm brine
O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far amid,
A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls of wave;
Only, she ever sickened, found repulse
At the other kind of water, not her life,
(Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o' the sun,)
Flounced back from bliss she was not born to breathe,
And in her old bounds buried her despair,
Hating and loving warmth alike: so He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,
Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping thing.
Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech;
Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,
That floats and feeds; a certain badger brown

He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge eye
By moonlight; and the pie with the long tongue
That pricks deep into oakwarts for a worm,
And says a plain word when she finds her prize.
But will not eat the ants; the ants themselves
That build a wall of seeds and settled stalks
About their hole—He made all these and more,
Made all we see, and us, in spite: how else?
He could not, Himself, make a second self
To be His mate; as well have made Himself:
He would not make what He mislikes or slights,
An eyesore to Him, or not worth His pains:
But did, in envy, listlessness or sport,
Make what Himself would fain, in a manner. be—
Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,
Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the while,
Things He admires and mocks too,—that is it.
Because, so brave, so better though they be,
It nothing skills if He begin to plague.
Look now, I melt a gourd-fruit into mash,
Add honeycomb and pods, I have perceived,
Which bite like finches when they bill and kiss,—
Then, when froth rises bladdery, drink up all.

Quick, quick, till maggots scamper through my
brain;
Last, throw me on my back i' the seeded thyme,
And wanton, wishing I were born a bird.
Put case, unable to be what I wish,
I yet could make a live bird out of clay:
Would not I take clay, pinch my Caliban
Able to fly?—for there, see, he hath wings,
And great comb like the hoopoe's to admire,
And there, a sting to do his foes offence,
There, and I will that he begin to live,
Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the horns
Of grigs high up that make the merry din,
Saucy through their veined wings, and mind
me not.
In which feat, if his leg snapped, brittle
clay,
And he lay stupid-like,—why, I should laugh;
And if he, spying me, should fall to weep,
Beseech me to be good, repair his wrong,
Bid his poor leg smart less or grow again,—
Well, as the chance were, this might take or
else
Not take my fancy: I might hear his cry,
And give the mankin three sound legs for one,
Or pluck the other off, leave him like an egg,
And lessoned he was mine and merely clay.
Were this no pleasure, lying in the thyme,
Drinking the mash, with brain become alive,

Making and marring clay at will? So He.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor wrong in Him,
Nor kind, nor cruel: He is strong and Lord.
'Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs
That march now from the mountain to the sea;
'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first,
Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.
'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple spots
Shall join the file, one pincer twisted off;
'Say, this bruised fellow shall receive a worm,
And two worms he whose nippers end in red;
As it likes me each time, I do: so He.

Well then, 'supposeth He is good i' the main,
Placable if His mind and ways were guessed,
But rougher than His handiwork, be sure!
Oh, He hath made things worthier than Himself,
And envieth that, so helped, such things do more
Than He who made them! What consoles but this?
That they, unless through Him, do naught at all,
And must submit: what other use in things?
'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-joint

That, blown through, gives exact the scream
o' the jay
When from her wing you twitch the feathers
blue:
Sound this, and little birds that hate the jay
Flock within stone's throw, glad their foe is
hurt:
Put case such pipe could prattle and boast for-
sooth,
"I catch the birds, I am the crafty thing,
I make the cry my maker cannot make
With his great round mouth; he must blow
through mine!"
Would not I smash it with my foot? So He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and ill at ease?
Aha, that is a question! Ask, for that,
What knows,—the something over Setebos
That made Him, or He, may be, found and
fought,
Worsted, drove off and did to nothing, per-
chance.
There may be something quiet o'er His head.
Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor grief.
Since both derive from weakness in some way.
I joy because the quails come; would not
joy
Could I bring quails here when I have a mind:
This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.
'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its couch,

But never spends much thought nor care that way.
It may look up, work up,—the worse for those
It works on! 'Careth but for Setebos
The many-handed as a cuttle-fish,
Who, making Himself feared through what He does,
Looks up, first, and perceives he cannot soar
To what is quiet and hath happy life;
Next looks down here, and out of very spite
Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon real,
These good things to match those as hips do grapes.
'Tis solace making baubles, ay, and sport.
Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at his books
Careless and lofty, lord now of the isle:
Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad leaves, arrow-shaped,
Wrote thereon, he knows what, prodigious words;
Has peeled a wand and called it by a name;
Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's robe
The eyed skin of a supple oncelot;
And hath an ounce sleeker than youngling mole,
A four-legged serpent he makes cower and couch,
Now snarl, now hold its breath and mind his eye,

And saith she is Miranda and my wife:
'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill crane
He bids go wade for fish and straight disgorge;
Also a sea-beast, lumpish, which he snared,
Blinded the eyes of, and brought somewhat tame,
And split its toe-webs, and now pens the drudge
In a hole o' the rock and calls him Caliban;
A bitter heart that bides its time and bites.
'Plays thus at being Prosper in a way,
Taketh his mirth with make-believes: so He.

His dam held that the Quiet made all things
Which Setebos vexed only: 'holds not so.
Who made them weak, meant weakness He might vex.
Had He meant other, while His hand was in.
Why not make horny eyes no thorn could prick,
Or plate my scalp with bone against the snow,
Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint and joint,
Like an orc's armor? Ay,—so spoil His sport!
He is the One now: only He doth all.

'Saith, He may like, perchance, what profits Him.
Ay, himself loves what does him good; but why?
'Gets good no otherwise. This blinded beast

Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his nose,
But, had he eyes, would want no help, but hate
Or love, just as it liked him: He hath eyes.
Also it pleaseth Setebos to work,
Use all His hands, and exercise much craft,
By no means for the love of what is worked.
'Tasteth, himself, no finer good i' the world
When all goes right, in this safe summer-time,
And he wants little, hungers, aches not much,
Than trying what to do with wit and strength.
'Falls to make something: 'piled yon pile of turfs,
And squared and stuck there squares of soft white chalk,
And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a moon on each,
And set up endwise certain spikes of tree,
And crowned the whole with a sloth's skull a-top,
Found dead i' the woods, too hard for one to kill.
No use at all 'i the work, for work's sole sake;
'Shall some day knock it down again: so He.

'Saith He is terrible: watch His feats in proof!
One hurricane will spoil six good months' hope.
He hath a spite against me, that I know.

Just as He favors Prosper, who knows why?
So it is, all the same, as well I find.
'Wove wattles half the winter, fenced them firm
With stone and stake to stop she-tortoises
Crawling to lay their eggs here: well, one wave,
Feeling the foot of Him upon its neck,
Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its large tongue,
And licked the whole labor flat: so much for spite!
'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder it lies)
Where, half an hour before, I slept i' the shade:
Often they scatter sparkles: there is force!
'Dug up a newt He may have envied once
And turned to stone, shut up inside a stone.
Please Him and hinder this?—What Prosper does?
Aha, if He would tell me how! Not He!
There is the sport: discover how or die!
All need not die, for of the things o' the isle
Some flee afar, some dive, some run up trees;
Those at His mercy,—why, they please Him most
When . . . when . . . well, never try the same way twice!
Repeat what act has pleased, He may grow wroth.

You must not know His ways, and play Him off,
Sure of the issue. 'Doth the like himself:
'Spareth a squirrel that it nothing fears
But steals the nut from underneath my thumb,
And when I threat, bites stoutly in defence:
'Spareth an urchin that contrariwise,
Curls up into a ball, pretending death
For fright at my approach: the two ways please.
But what would move my choler more than this,
That either creature counted on its life
To-morrow, next day and all days to come,
Saying, forsooth, in the inmost of its heart,
"Because he did so yesterday with me,
And otherwise with such another brute,
So must he do henceforth and always."—Ay?
'Would teach the reasoning couple what "must" means!
'Doth as he likes, or wherefore Lord? So He.

'Conceiveth all things will continue thus,
And we shall have to live in fear of Him
So long as He lives, keeps His strength: no change,
If He have done His best, make no new world
To please Him more, so leave off watching this,—
If He surprise not even the Quiet's self

Some strange day,—or, suppose, grow into it
As grubs grow butterflies: else, here we are,
And there is He, and nowhere help at all.
'Believeth with the life, the pain shall stop.
His dam held different, that after death
He both plagued enemies and feasted friends:
Idly! He doth His worst in this our life,
Giving just respite lest we die through pain,
Saving last pain for worst,—with which, an end.
Meanwhile, the best way to escape His ire
Is, not to seem too happy. 'Sees, himself,
Yonder two flies, with purple films and pink,
Bask on the pompion-bell above: kills both.
'Sees two black painful beetles roll their ball
On head and tail as if to save their lives:
'Moves them the stick away they strive to clear.

Even so, 'would have him misconceive, suppose
This Caliban strives hard and ails no less,
And always, above all else, envies Him;
Wherefore he mainly dances on dark nights,
Moans in the sun, gets under holes to laugh,
And never speaks his mind save housed as now:
Outside, 'groans, curses. If He caught me here,
O'erheard this speech, and asked "What chucklest at?"
'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger off,
Or of my three kid yearlings burn the best,

Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree,
Or push my tame beast for the orc to taste:
While myself lit a fire, and made a song
And sung it, *"What I hate, be consecrate*
To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate
For Thee; what see for envy in poor me?"
Hoping the while, since evils sometimes mend,
Warts rub away and sores are cured with slime,
That some strange day, will either the Quiet catch
And conquer Setebos, or likelier He
Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as die.

[What, what? A curtain o'er the world at once!
Crickets stop hissing; not a bird—or, yes,
There scuds His raven, that hath told Him all!
It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha! The wind
Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house o' the move,
And fast invading fires begin! White blaze—
A tree's head snaps—and there, there, there, there, there,
His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at Him!
Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!
'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper lip,
Will let those quails fly, will not eat this month
One little mess of whelks, so he may 'scape!]

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME"

(*See Edgar's song in "Lear."*)

My first thought was, he lied in every word,
That hoary cripple, with malicious eye
Askance to watch the working of his lie
On mine, and mouth scarce able to afford
Suppression° of the glee, that pursed and scored
Its edge, at one more victim gained thereby.

What else should he be set for, with his staff?
What, save to waylay with his lies, ensnare
All travellers who might find him posted there,
And ask the road? I guessed what skull-like laugh
Would break, what crutch 'gin write my epitaph
For pastime in the dusty thoroughfare,

If at his counsel I should turn aside
Into that ominous tract which, all agree,
Hides the Dark Tower. Yet acquiescingly
I did turn as he pointed: neither pride
Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,
So much as gladness that some end might be.

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering,
What with my search drawn out through years, my hope
Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope
With that obstreperous joy success would bring,—
I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring
My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

As when a sick man very near to death
Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and end
The tears, and takes the farewell of each friend,
And hears one bid the other go, draw breath
Freelier outside, ("since all is o'er," he saith,
"And the blow fallen no grieving can amend;")

While some discuss if near the other graves
Be room enough for this, and when a day
Suits best for carrying the corpse away,
With care about the banners, scarves, and staves:
And still the man hears all, and only craves
He may not shame such tender love and stay.

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest,
Heard failure prophesied so oft, been writ
So many times among "The Band"—to wit,

The knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed
Their steps—that just to fail as they, seemed best,
And all the doubt was now—should I be fit?

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him,
That hateful cripple, out of his highway
Into the path he pointed. All the day
Had been a dreary one at best, and dim
Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim
Red leer to see the plain catch its estray.°

For mark! no sooner was I fairly found
Pledged to the plain, after a pace or two,
Than, pausing to throw backward a last view
O'er the safe road, 'twas gone; gray plain all round:
Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.
I might go on; naught else remained to do.

So, on I went. I think I never saw
Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve:
For flowers—as well expect a cedar grove!
But cockle, spurge, according to their law
Might propagate their kind, with none to awe.
You'd think: a burr had been a treasure trove.

No! penury, inertness, and grimace,
In some strange sort, were the land's portion. "See
Or shut your eyes," said Nature peevishly,
"It nothing skills: I cannot help my case:
'Tis the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place,
Calcine its clods and set my prisoners° free."

If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk
Above its mates, the head was chopped; the bents°
Were jealous else. What made those holes and rents
In the dock's harsh swarth leaves, bruised as° to balk
All hope of greenness? 'tis a brute must walk
Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents.

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair
In leprosy; thin dry blades pricked the mud
Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.
One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,
Stood stupefied, however he came there:
Thrust out past service from the devil's stud!

Alive? he might be dead for aught I know,
With that red gaunt and colloped neck a-strain,

CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME

And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane;
Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe:
I never saw a brute I hated so;
He must be wicked to deserve such pain.

I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.
As a man calls for wine before he fights,
I asked one draught of earlier, happier sights,
Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.
Think first, fight afterwards—the soldier's art:
One taste of the old time sets all to rights.

Not it°! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face
Beneath its garniture of curly gold,
Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold
An arm in mine to fix me to the place,
That way he used. Alas, one night's disgrace!
Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

Giles then, the soul of honor—there he stands
Frank as ten years ago when knighted first.
What honest man should dare (he said) he durst.
Good—but the scene shifts—faugh! what hangman hands
Pin to his breast a parchment? His own bands
Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and curst!

Better this present than a past like that;

Back therefore to my darkening path again!
No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.
Will the night send a howlet° or a bat?
I asked: when something on the dismal flat
Came to arrest my thoughts and change their train.

A sudden little river crossed my path
As unexpected as a serpent comes.
No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms;
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath
For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see the wrath
Of its black eddy bespate° with flakes and spumes.

So petty yet so spiteful! All along,
Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;
Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit
Of mute despair, a suicidal throng:
The river which had done them all the wrong,
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

Which, while I forded,—good saints, how I feared
To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,
Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek
For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard!

—It may have been a water-rat I speared,
But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's shriek.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.
Now for a better country. Vain presage!
Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage,
Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank
Soil to a plash? Toads in a poisoned tank,
Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage—

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.°
What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?
No footprint leading to that horrid mews,
None out of it. Mad brewage set to work
Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk
Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews.

And more than that—a furlong on—why, there!
What bad use was that engine for, that wheel,
Or brake, not wheel—that harrow fit to reel
Men's bodies out like silk? with all the air
Of Tophet's° tool, on earth left unaware,
Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth of steel.

Then came a bit of stubbed ground, once a wood,
Next a marsh, it would seem, and now mere earth
Desperate and done with: (so a fool finds mirth,
Makes a thing and then mars it, till his mood
Changes and off he goes!) within a rood—
Bog, clay and rubble, sand and stark black dearth.

Now blotches rankling, colored gay and grim,
Now patches where some leanness of the soil's
Broke into moss or substances like boils;
Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in him
Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim
Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils.

And just as far as ever from the end!
Naught in the distance but the evening, naught
To point my footstep further! At the thought,
A great black bird, Apollyon's° bosom-friend,
Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing dragon-penned
That brushed my cap—perchance the guide I sought.

For, looking up, aware I somehow grew,
'Spite of the dusk, the plain had given place
All round to mountains—with such name to grace
Mere ugly heights and heaps now stolen in view.
How thus they had surprised me,—solve it, you!
How to get from them was no clearer case.

Yet half I seemed to recognize some trick
Of mischief happened to me, God knows when—
In a bad dream perhaps. Here ended, then,
Progress this way. When, in the very nick
Of giving up, one time more, came a click
As when a trap shuts—you're inside the den!

Burningly it came on me all at once,
This was the place! those two hills on the right,
Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight;
While to the left a tall scalped mountain . . . Dunce,
Dotard, a-dozing at the very nonce,
After a life spent training for the sight!

What in the midst lay but the Tower itself?
The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart,

Built of brown stone, without a counterpart
In the whole world. The tempest's mocking elf
Points to the shipman thus the unseen shelf
He strikes on, only when the timbers start.

Not see? because of night perhaps?—why, day
Came back again for that! before it left,
The dying sunset kindled through a cleft:
The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,
Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay,—
"Now stab and end the creature—to the heft!"

Not hear? when noise was everywhere! it tolled
Increasing like a bell. Names in my ears,
Of all the lost adventurers my peers,—
How such a one was strong, and such was bold,
And such was fortunate, yet each of old
Lost, lost! one moment knelled the woe of years.

There they stood, ranged along the hillsides, met
To view the last of me, a living frame
For one more picture! in a sheet of flame
I saw them and I knew them all. And yet
Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,
And blew. *"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came."*

AN EPISTLE

Containing the Strange Medical Experience of Karshish, the Arab Physician

Karshish, the picker-up of learning's crumbs,
The not-incurious in God's handiwork
(This man's flesh he hath admirably made,
Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste,
To coop up and keep down on earth a space
That puff of vapor from his mouth, man's soul)
—To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,
Breeder in me of what poor skill I boast,
Like me inquisitive how pricks and cracks
Befall the flesh through too much stress and strain,
Whereby the wily vapor fain would slip
Back and rejoin its source before the term,—
And aptest in contrivance (under God)
To baffle it by deftly stopping such°—
The vagrant Scholar to his Sage° at home
Sends greeting (health and knowledge, fame with peace)
Three samples of true snake-stone°—rarer still,
One of the other sort, the melon-shaped,
(But fitter, pounded fine, for charms° than drugs)

And writeth now the twenty-second time.
My journeyings° were brought to Jericho:
Thus I resume. Who studious in our art
Shall count a little labor unrepaid?
I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and bone
On many a flinty furlong of this land.
Also, the country-side is all on fire
With rumors of a marching hitherward:
Some say Vespasian° cometh, some, his son.
A black lynx snarled and pricked a tufted ear;
Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow balls:
I cried and threw my staff and he was gone.
Twice have the robbers stripped and beaten me,
And once a town declared me for a spy;
But at the end, I reach Jerusalem,
Since this poor covert where I pass the night,
This Bethany, lies scarce the distance thence
A man with plague-sores at the third degree
Runs till he drops down dead.° Thou laughest here!
'Sooth, it elates me, thus reposed and safe,
To void the stuffing of my travel-scrip
And share with thee whatever Jewry yields.
A viscid choler is observable
In tertians, I was nearly bold to say;
And falling-sickness hath a happier cure°
Than our school wots of: there's a spider here
Weaves no web, watches on the ledge of tombs,

Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-gray back;
Take five and drop them° . . . but who knows
his mind,
The Syrian runagate I trust this to?
His service payeth me a sublimate
Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.
Best wait: I reach Jerusalem at morn,
There set in order my experiences,
Gather what most deserves, and give thee all—
Or I might add, Judæ's gum-tragacanth
Scales off in purer flakes, shines clearer-grained,
Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the porphyry,
In fine exceeds our produce. Scalp-disease
Confounds me, crossing so with leprosy—
Thou hadst admired one sort I gained at
Zoar—
But zeal outruns discretion. Here I end.

Yet stay: my Syrian blinketh gratefully,
Protesteth his devotion is my price—
Suppose I write what harms not, though he
steal?
I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush°
What set me off a-writing first of all.
An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang!
For, be it this town's barrenness—or else
The Man had something in the look of him—
His case has struck me far more than 'tis
worth.
So, pardon if—(lest presently I lose

In the great press of novelty at hand
The care and pains this somehow stole from me)
I bid thee take the thing while fresh in mind,
Almost in sight—for, wilt thou have the truth?
The very man is gone from me but now,
Whose ailment is the subject of discourse.
Thus then, and let thy better wit help all!

'Tis but a case of mania—subinduced
By epilepsy, at the turning-point
Of trance prolonged unduly some three days:
When, by the exhibition of some drug
Or spell, exorcisation, stroke of art
Unknown to me and which 'twere well to know,
The evil thing out-breaking all at once
Left the man whole and sound of body indeed,—
But, flinging (so to speak) life's gates too wide,
Making a clear house of it too suddenly,
The first conceit that entered might inscribe
Whatever it was minded on the wall
So plainly at that vantage, as it were,
(First come, first served) that nothing subsequent
Attaineth to erase those fancy-scrawls
The just-returned and new-established soul
Hath gotten now so thoroughly by heart
That henceforth she will read or these or none.

And first—the man's own firm conviction rests
That he was dead (in fact they buried him)
—That he was dead and then restored to life
By a Nazarene physician of his tribe:
—'Sayeth, the same bade "Rise," and he did rise.
"Such cases are diurnal," thou wilt cry.
Not so this figment!—not, that such a fume,
Instead of giving way to time and health,
Should eat itself into the life of life,
As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones and all!
For see, how he takes up the after-life.
The man—it is one Lazarus a Jew,
Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of age,
The body's habit wholly laudable,
As much, indeed, beyond the common health
As he were made and put aside to show.
Think, could we penetrate by any drug
And bathe the wearied soul and worried flesh,
And bring it clear and fair, by three days' sleep!
Whence has the man the balm that brightens all?
This grown man eyes the world now like a child.
Some elders of his tribe, I should premise,
Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,
To bear my inquisition. While they spoke,
Now sharply, now with sorrow,—told the case,—

He listened not except I spoke to him,
But folded his two hands and let them talk,
Watching the flies that buzzed: and yet no fool.
And that's a sample how his years must go.
Look, if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,
Should find a treasure,—can he use the same
With straitened habits and with tastes starved small,
And take at once to his impoverished brain
The sudden element that changes things,
That sets the undreamed-of rapture at his hand
And puts the cheap old joy in the scorned dust?
Is he not such an one as moves to mirth—
Warily parsimonious, when no need,
Wasteful as drunkenness at undue times?
All prudent counsel as to what befits
The golden mean, is lost on such an one:
The man's fantastic will is the man's law.
So here—we call the treasure knowledge, say,
Increased beyond the fleshly faculty—
Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,
Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven:
The man is witless of the size, the sum,
The value in proportion of all things,
Or whether it be little or be much.
Discourse to him of prodigious armaments
Assembled to besiege his city now,
And of the passing of a mule with gourds—

'Tis one! Then take it on the other side,
Speak of some trifling fact,—he will gaze rapt
With stupor at its very littleness,
(Far as I see) as if in that indeed
He caught prodigious import, whole results;
And so will turn to us the bystanders
In ever the same stupor (note this point)
That we too see not with his opened eyes.
Wonder and doubt come wrongly into play,
Preposterously, at cross purposes.
Should his child sicken unto death,—why, look
For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness,
Or pretermission of the daily craft!
While a word, gesture, glance from that same child
At play or in the school or laid asleep
Will startle him to an agony of fear,
Exasperation, just as like. Demand
The reason why—"'tis but a word," object—
"A gesture"—he regards thee as our lord
Who lived there in the pyramid alone,
Looked at us—dost thou mind?—when, being young,
We both would unadvisedly recite
Some charm's beginning, from that book of his,°
Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst
All into stars, as suns grown old are wont.
Thou and the child have each a veil alike

Thrown o'er your heads, from under which ye both
Stretch your blind hands and trifle with a match
Over a mine of Greek fire,° did ye know!
He holds on firmly to some thread of life
(It is the life to lead perforcedly)
Which runs across some vast distracting orb
Of glory on either side that meagre thread,
Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet—
The spiritual life around the earthly life:
The law of that is known to him as this,
His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here.
So is the man perplext with impulses
Sudden to start off crosswise, not straight on,
Proclaiming what is right and wrong across,
And not along, this black thread through the blaze—
"It should be" balked by "here it cannot be."
And oft the man's soul springs into his face
As if he saw again and heard again
His sage that bade him "Rise" and he did rise.
Something, a word, a tick o' the blood within
Admonishes: then back he sinks at once
To ashes, who was very fire before,
In sedulous recurrence to his trade
Whereby he earneth him the daily bread;
And studiously the humbler for that pride,

Professedly the faultier that he knows
God's secret, while he holds the thread of life.
Indeed the especial marking of the man
Is prone submission to the heavenly will—
Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.
'Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last
For that same death which must restore his being
To equilibrium, body loosening soul
Divorced even now by premature full growth:
He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live
So long as God please, and just how God please.
He even seeketh not to please God more
(Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please.
Hence, I perceive not he affects to preach
The doctrine of his sect whate'er it be,
Make proselytes as madmen thirst to do:
How can he give his neighbor the real ground,
His own conviction? Ardent as he is—
Call his great truth a lie, why, still the old
"Be it as God please" reassureth him.
I probed the sore as thy disciple should:
"How, beast," said I, "this stolid carelessness
Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her march
To stamp out like a little spark thy town,
Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee at once?"
He merely looked with his large eyes on me.
The man is apathetic, you deduce?

Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,
Able and weak, affects the very brutes
And birds—how say I? flowers of the field—
As a wise workman recognizes tools.
In a master's workshop, loving what they make.
Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb:
Only impatient, let him do his best,
At ignorance and carelessness and sin—
An indignation which is promptly curbed:
As when in certain travel I have feigned
To be an ignoramus in our art
According to some preconceived design,
And happed to hear the land's practitioners,
Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignorance,
Prattle fantastically on disease,
Its cause and cure—and I must hold my peace!

Thou wilt object—Why have I not ere this
Sought out the sage himself, the Nazarene
Who wrought this cure, inquiring at the source,
Conferring with the frankness that befits?
Alas! it grieveth me, the learned leech
Perished in a tumult many years ago,
Accused—our learning's fate—of wizardry,
Rebellion, to the setting up a rule
And creed prodigious as described to me.
His death, which happened when the earthquake fell°

(Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the loss
To occult learning in our lord the sage
Who lived there in the pyramid alone)
Was wrought by the mad people—that's their wont!
On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,
To his tried virtue, for miraculous help—
How could he stop the earthquake? That's their way!
The other imputations must be lies:
But take one, though I loathe to give it thee,
In mere respect for any good man's fame.
(And after all, our patient Lazarus
Is stark mad; should we count on what he says?
Perhaps not: though in writing to a leech
'Tis well to keep back nothing of a case.)
This man so cured regards the curer, then,
As—God forgive me! who but God himself,
Creator and sustainer of the world,
That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile!
—'Sayeth that such an one was born and lived,
Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own house,
Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,
And yet was . . . what I said nor choose repeat,
And must have so avouched himself, in fact,
In hearing of this very Lazarus
Who saith—but why all this of what he saith?
Why write of trivial matters, things of price

Calling at every moment for remark?
I noticed on the margin of a pool
Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo sort,
Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange!

Thy pardon for this long and tedious case,
Which, now that I review it, needs must seem
Unduly dwelt on, prolixly set forth!
Nor I myself discern in what is writ
Good cause for the peculiar interest
And awe indeed this man has touched me with.
Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness
Had wrought upon me first. I met him thus:
I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken hills
Like an old lion's cheek teeth. Out there came
A moon made like a face with certain spots
Multiform, manifold, and menacing:
Then a wind rose behind me. So we met
In this old sleepy town at unaware,
The man and I. I send thee what is writ.
Regard it as a chance, a matter risked
To this ambiguous Syrian—he may lose,
Or steal, or give it thee with equal good.
Jerusalem's repose shall make amends
For time this letter wastes, thy time and mine;
Till when, once more thy pardon and farewell!

The very God! ° think, Abib; dost thou think?

So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!"
The madman saith He said so: it is strange.

SAUL

I

Said Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou speak,
Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I wished it, and did kiss his cheek.
And he: "Since the King, O my friend, for thy countenance sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have we; not until from his tent
Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth yet,
Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the water be wet.
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,

Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer nor of praise,
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life.

II

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's child with his dew
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living and blue
Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat
Were now raging to torture the desert!"

III

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose on my feet,
And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was unlooped;
I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I stooped;
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all withered and gone,
That extends to the second enclosure, I groped my way on

Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then once more I prayed,
And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was not afraid
But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!" And no voice replied.
At the first I saw naught but the blackness: but soon I descried
A something more black than the blackness—the vast, the upright
Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and slow into sight
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all.
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent roof, showed Saul.

IV

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms stretched out wide
On the great cross-support in the centre, that goes to each side;
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as, caught in his pangs
And waiting his change, the king-serpent all heavily hangs,
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliverance come
With the spring-time,—so agonized Saul, drear and stark, blind and dumb.

V

Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies we twine round its chords
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noon-tide—those sunbeams like swords!
And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as, one after one,
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done.
They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the water within the stream's bed;
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue and so far!

VI

—Then the tune for which quails on the corn-land will each leave his mate
To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate
Till for boldness they fight one another; and then, what has weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand house—
There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half mouse!

God made all the creatures and gave them our
love and our fear,
To give sign, we and they are his children, one
family here.

VII

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers,
their wine-song, when hand
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friend-
ship, and great hearts expand
And grow one in the sense of this world's life.
—And then, the last song
When the dead man is praised on his journey
—"Bear, bear him along,
With his few faults shut up like dead flow-
erets! Are balm seeds not here
To console us? The land has none left such as
he on the bier.
Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!"
—And then, the glad chaunt
Of the marriage,—first go the young maidens.
next, she whom we vaunt
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling.—And
then, the great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and
buttress an arch
Naught can break; who shall harm them, our
friends? Then, the chorus intoned
As the Levites go up to the altar in glory en-
throned.

But I stopped here: for here in the darkness
Saul groaned.

VIII

And I paused, held my breath in such silence,
and listened apart;
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered: and sparkles 'gan dart
From the jewels that woke in his turban, at once with a start,
All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous at heart.
So the head: but the body still moved not, still hung there erect.
And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it unchecked,
As I sang:—

IX

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor!
No spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,

And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold-dust divine,
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draught of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy!
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose sword thou didst guard
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glorious reward?
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held up as men sung
The low song of the nearly-departed, and hear her faint tongue
Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand through a life-time, and all was for best'?
Then they sung through their tears in strong triumph, not much, but the rest.
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the working whence grew

Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the spirit strained true:
And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood of wonder and hope,
Present promise and wealth of the future beyond the eye's scope,—
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is thine:
And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on one head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage (like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and lets the gold go)
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame crowning them,—all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature —King Saul!"

X

And lo, with that leap of my spirit,—heart, hand, harp and voice,
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each bidding rejoice
Saul's fame in the light it was made for—as when, dare I say,
The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains through its array,
And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot—"Saul!" cried I, and stopped,

And waited the thing that should follow. Then Saul, who hung propped
By the tent's cross-support in the centre, was struck by his name.
Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes right to the aim,
And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that held (he alone,
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a broad bust of stone
A year's snow bound about for a breastplate, —leaves grasp of the sheet?
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his feet,
And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages untold—
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each furrow and scar
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest —all hail, there they are!
—Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold the nest
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the green on his crest
For their food in the ardors of summer. One long shudder thrilled
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was stilled

At the King's self left standing before me, released and aware.
What was gone, what remained? All to traverse 'twixt hope and despair,
Death was past, life not come: so he waited. Awhile his right hand
Held the brow, helped the eyes left too vacant forthwith to remand
To their place what new objects should enter: 'twas Saul as before.
I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes, nor was hurt any more
Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye watch from the shore,
At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean—a sun's slow decline
Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'er-lap and entwine
Base with base to knit strength more intensely: so, arm folded arm
O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

XI

What spell or what charm,
(For awhile there was trouble within me) what next should I urge
To sustain him where song had restored him? —Song filled to the verge
His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields

SAUL

Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty:
beyond, on what fields,
Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to
brighten the eye
And bring blood to the lip, and commend them
the cup they put by?
He saith, "It is good"; still he drinks not: he
lets me praise life,
Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

XII

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when
round me the sheep
Fed in silence—above, the one eagle wheeled
slow as in sleep;
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the
world that might lie
'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip
'twixt the hill and the sky:
And I laughed—"Since my days are ordained
to be passed with my flocks,
Let me people at least, with my fancies, the
plains and the rocks,
Dream the life I am never to mix with, and
image the show
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I
hardly shall know!
Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses,
the courage that gains,

And the prudence that keeps what men strive
for." And now these old trains
Of vague thought came again; I grew surer;
so, once more the string
Of my harp made response to my spirit, as
thus—

XIII

"Yea, my King,"
I began—"thou dost well in rejecting mere
comforts that spring
From the mere mortal life held in common by
man and by brute:
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in
our soul it bears fruit.
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree,—
how its stem trembled first
Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler;
then safely outburst
The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest
when these too, in turn,
Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed per-
fect: yet more was to learn,
E'en the good that comes in with the palm-
fruit. Our dates shall we slight,
When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow?
or care for the plight
Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced
them? Not so! stem and branch

Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine shall staunch
Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such wine.
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!
By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt enjoy
More indeed, than at first when inconscious, the life of a boy.
Crush that life, and behold its wine running! Each deed thou hast done
Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until e'en as the sun
Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil him, though tempests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everywhere trace
The results of his past summer-prime,—so, each ray of thy will,
Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill
Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor, till they too give forth
A like cheer to their sons, who in turn, fill the South and the North
With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse in the past!
But the license of age has its limit; thou diest at last:

As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her height,
So with man—so his power and his beauty forever take flight.
No! Again a long draught of my soul-wine! Look forth o'er the years!
Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual; begin with the seer's!
Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make his tomb—bid arise
A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to the skies,
Let it mark where the great First-King slumbers: whose fame would ye know?
Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go
In great characters cut by the scribe,—Such was Saul, so he did;
With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid,—
For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised there! Which fault to amend,
In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon they shall spend
(See, in tablets 'tis level before them) their praise, and record
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story,—the statesman's great word
Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The river's a-wave

With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other
when prophet-winds rave:
So the pen gives unborn generations their due
and their part
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank
God that thou art!"

XIV

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who
didst grant me that day,
And before it not seldom hast granted thy help
to essay,
Carry on and complete an adventure,—my
shield and my sword
In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy
word was my word,—
Still be with me, who then at the summit of
human endeavor
And scaling the highest, man's thought could,
gazed hopeless as ever
On the new stretch of heaven above me—till,
mighty to save,
Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance
—God's throne from man's grave!
Let me tell out my tale to its ending—my voice
to my heart
Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels
last night I took part,
As this morning I gather the fragments, alone
with my sheep,

And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish like sleep!
For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron upheaves
The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and Kidron retrieves
Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

XV

I say then,—my song
While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and ever more strong
Made a proffer of good to console him—he slowly resumed
His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right hand replumed
His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted the swathes
Of his turban, and see—the huge sweat that his countenance bathes,
He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now his loins as of yore,
And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the clasp set before.
He is Saul, ye remember in glory,—ere error had bent
The broad brow from the daily communion; and still, though much spent
Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same, God did choose,

To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose.
So sank he along by the tent-prop till, stayed by the pile
Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he leaned there awhile,
And sat out my singing,—one arm round the tent-prop, to raise
His bent head, and the other hung slack—till I touched on the praise
I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man patient there;
And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first I was 'ware
That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees
Which were thrust on out each side around me, like oak roots which please
To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know
If the best I could do had brought solace: he spoke not, but slow
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: through my hair
The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head with kind power—
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.

Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized mine—
And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the sign?
I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,
I would add, to that life of the past, both the future and this;
I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence,
As this moment,—had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!"

XVI

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more —no song more! outbroke—

XVII

"I have gone the whole round of creation: I saw and I spoke:
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork—returned him again
His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I saw:

I report, as man may of God's work—all's love,
yet all's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each
faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where
a dewdrop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at
Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank,
to the Infinite Care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image suc-
cess?
I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more
and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and
God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul
and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever
renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending
upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to
God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to
his feet.
Yet with all this abounding experience, this
deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some
gift of my own.

There's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance, (I laugh as I think)
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I worst
E'en the Giver in one gift.—Behold, I could love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love: I abstain for love's sake.
—What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors great and small,
Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth appal?
In the least things have faith, yet distrust in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it? Here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator,—the end, what began?
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt he alone shall not help him, who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will, much less power,

To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvellous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears attest),
These good things being given, to go on, and give one more, the best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him, maintain at the height
This perfection,—succeed with life's dayspring, death's minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul the mistake,
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now,—and bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life,—a new harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended—who knows?—or endure!
The man taught enough by life's dream, of the rest to make sure;
By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by the struggles in this.

XVIII

"I believe it! 'Tis thou, God, that givest, 'tis I who receive:
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
All's one gift: thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt to my prayer
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air.
From thy will stream the worlds, life and nature, thy dread Sabaoth:
I will?—the mere atoms despise me! Why am I not loath
To look that, even that in the face too? Why is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance? What stops my despair?
This:—'tis not what man Does which exalts him, but what man Would do!
See the King—I would help him but cannot, the wishes fall through.
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would —knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou—so wilt thou!

So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death!
As thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

XIX

I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,

Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware:
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as strugglingly there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished for news—
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with her crews;
And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge: but I fainted not,
For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported, suppressed
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest.
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth—
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender birth;
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the hills;
In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the sudden wind-thrills;
In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each with eye sidling still
Though averted with wonder and dread; in the birds stiff and chill

That rose heavily, as I approached them, made
stupid with awe:
E'en the serpent that slid away silent,—he felt
the new law.
The same stared in the white humid faces up-
turned by the flowers;
The same worked in the heart of the cedar and
moved the vine-bowers:
And the little brooks witnessing murmured,
persistent and low,
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—
"E'en so, it is so!"

HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY

I ONLY knew one poet in my life:
And this, or something like it, was his way.

You saw go up and down Valladolid,°
A man of mark, to know next time you saw.
His very serviceable suit of black
Was courtly once and conscientious still,
And many might have worn it, though none
did:
The cloak, that somewhat shone and showed
the threads,
Had purpose, and the ruff, significance.
He walked and tapped the pavement with his
cane,

Scenting the world, looking it full in face,
An old dog, bald and blindish, at his heels,
They turned up, now, the alley by the church,
That leads nowhither; now, they breathed themselves
On the main promenade just at the wrong time:
You'd come upon his scrutinising hat,°
Making a peaked shade blacker than itself
Against the single window spared some house
Intact yet with its mouldered Moorish work,—
Or else surprise the ferrel of his stick
Trying the mortar's temper 'tween the chinks
Of some new shop a-building, French and fine.
He stood and watched the cobbler at his trade,
The man who slices lemons into drink,
The coffee-roaster's brazier, and the boys
That volunteer to help him turn its winch.
He glanced o'er books on stalls with half an eye,
And fly-leaf ballads° on the vendor's string,
And broad-edge bold-print posters by the wall.
He took such cognisance of men and things,
If any beat a horse, you felt he saw;
If any cursed a woman, he took note;
Yet stared at nobody,—you stared at him,
And found, less to your pleasure than surprise,
He seemed to know you and expect as much.
So, next time that a neighbour's tongue was loosed,

It marked the shameful and notorious fact,
We had among us, not so much a spy,
As a recording chief-inquisitor,
The town's true master if the town but knew!
We merely kept a governor for form,
While this man walked about and took account
Of all thought, said and acted, then went home,
And wrote it fully to our Lord the King
Who has an itch to know things, he knows why,
And reads them in his bedroom of a night.
Oh, you might smile! there wanted not a touch,
A tang of . . . well, it was not wholly ease
As back into your mind the man's look came.
Stricken in years a little,—such a brow
His eyes had to live under!—clear as flint
On either side the formidable nose
Curved, cut and coloured like an eagle's claw.
Had he to do with A.'s surprising fate?
When altogether old B. disappeared
And young C. got his mistress,—was't our friend,
His letter to the King, that did it all?
What paid the bloodless man for so much pains?
Our Lord the King has favourites manifold,
And shifts his ministry some once a month;
Our city gets new governors at whiles,—
But never word or sign, that I could hear,

Notified to this man about the streets
The King's approval of those letters conned
The last thing duly at the dead of night.
Did the man love his office? Frowned our Lord,
Exhorting when none heard—"Beseech me not!
"Too far above my people,—beneath me!
"I set the watch,—how should the people know?
"Forget them, keep me all the more in mind!"
Was some such understanding 'twixt the two?
I found no truth in one report at least—
That if you tracked him to his home, down lanes
Beyond the Jewry, and as clean to pace,
You found he ate his supper in a room
Blazing with lights, four Titians on the wall,
And twenty naked girls to change his plate!
Poor man, he lived another kind of life
In that new stuccoed third house by the bridge,
Fresh-painted, rather smart than otherwise!
The whole street might o'erlook him as he sat,
Leg crossing leg, one foot on the dog's back,
Playing a decent cribbage with his maid
(Jacynth, you're sure her name was) o'er the cheese
And fruit, three red halves of starved winter-pears,
Or treat of radishes in April. Nine,

Ten, struck the church clock, straight to bed
went he.

My father, like the man of sense he was,
Would point him out to me a dozen times;
"'St—'St," he'd whisper, "the Corregidor°!"
I had been used to think that personage
Was one with lacquered breeches, lustrous belt,
And feathers like a forest in his hat,
Who blew a trumpet and proclaimed the news,
Announced the bull-fights, gave each church its
turn,
And memorised the miracle in vogue!
He had a great observance from us boys;
We were in error; that was not the man.

I'd like now, yet had haply been afraid,
To have just looked, when this man came to
die,
And seen who lined the clean gay garret-sides
And stood about the neat low truckle-bed,
With the heavenly manner of relieving guard.
Here had been, mark, the general-in-chief,
Thro' a whole campaign of the world's life and
death,
Doing the King's work all the dim day long,
In his old coat and up to knees in mud,
Smoked like a herring, dining on a crust,—
And, now the day was won, relieved at once!
No further show or need for that old coat,

You are sure, for one thing! Bless us, all the while
How sprucely we are dressed out, you and I!
A second, and the angels alter that.
Well, I could never write a verse,—could you?
Let's to the Prado° and make the most of time.

ONE WORD MORE

TO E. B. B.

I

THERE they are, my fifty men and women
Naming me the fifty poems finished!
Take them, Love, the book and me together;
Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

II

Rafael° made a century of sonnets,
Made and wrote them in a certain volume
Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
Else he only used to draw Madonnas:
These, the world might view—but one, the volume.
Who that one,° you ask? Your heart instructs you.
Did she live and love it all her lifetime?
Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,

Die, and let it drop beside her pillow
Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,
Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving—
Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,
Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

III

You and I would rather read that volume,
(Taken to his beating bosom by it)
Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael,
Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas—
Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,
Her, that visits Florence in a vision,
Her, that's left with lilies in the Louvre—
Seen by us and all the world in circle.

IV

You and I will never read that volume.
Guido Reni,° like his own eye's apple
Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.
Guido Reni dying, all Bologna
Cried, and the world cried too, "Ours, the treasure!"
Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

V

Dante° once prepared to paint an angel:
Whom to please? You whisper "Beatrice."°

While he mused and traced it and retraced it,
(Peradventure with a pen corroded
Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,
When, his left-hand i' the hair o' the wicked,°
Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,
Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,
Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle,
Let the wretch go festering through Florence)—
Dante, who loved well because he hated,
Hated wickedness that hinders loving,
Dante standing, studying his angel,—
In there broke the folk of his Inferno.°
Says he—"Certain people of importance"
(Such he gave his daily dreadful line to)
"Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet."
Says the poet—"Then I stopped my painting."

VI

You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
Would we not?—than read a fresh Inferno.

VII

You and I will never see that picture.
While he mused on love and Beatrice,
While he softened o'er his outlined angel,

In they broke, those "people of importance:"
We and Bice° bear the loss forever.

VIII

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?
This: no artist lives and loves, that longs not
Once, and only once, and for one only,
(Ah, the prize!) to find his love a language
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient—
Using nature that's an art to others,
Not, this one time, art that's turned his nature.
Ay, of all the artists living, loving,
None but would forego his proper dowry,—
Does he paint? he fain would write a poem,—
Does he write? he fain would paint a picture,
Put to proof art alien to the artist's,
Once, and only once, and for one only,
So to be the man and leave the artist,
Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

IX

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!
He who smites the rock° and spreads the water,
Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him,
Even he, the minute makes immortal,
Proves, perchance, but mortal in the minute,

Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.
While he smites, how can he but remember,
So he smote before, in such a peril,
When they stood and mocked—"Shall smiting help us?"
When they drank and sneered—"A stroke is easy!"
When they wiped their mouths and went their journey,
Throwing him for thanks—"But drought was pleasant."
Thus old memories mar the actual triumph;
Thus the doing savors of disrelish;
Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;
O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,
Carelessness or consciousness—the gesture.
For he bears an ancient wrong about him,
Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,
Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude—
"How shouldst thou, of all men, smite, and save us?"
Guesses what is like to prove the sequel—
"Egypt's flesh-pots°—nay, the drought was better."

X

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant°
Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,°

Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.
Never dares the man put off the prophet.

XI

Did he love one face from out the thousands,
(Were she Jethro's daughter,° white and wifely,
Were she but the Æthiopian bondslave,)
He would envy yon dumb patient camel,
Keeping a reserve of scanty water
Meant to save his own life in the desert;
Ready in the desert to deliver
(Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)
Hoard and life together for his mistress.

XII

I shall never, in the years remaining,
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,
Make you music that should all-express me;
So it seems: I stand on my attainment.
This of verse alone, one life allows me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.
Other heights in other lives, God willing;
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!

XIII

Yet a semblance of resource avails us—
Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize it.
Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,
Lines I write the first time and the last time.
He who works in fresco, steals a hair-brush,
Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,
Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,
Makes a strange art of an art familiar,
Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets.
He who blows through bronze, may breathe through silver,
Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess.
He who writes, may write for once as I do.

XIV

Love, you saw me gather men and women,
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
Enter each and all, and use their service,
Speak from every mouth,—the speech, a poem.
Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,
Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving:
I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's,
Karshish,° Cleon,° Norbert,° and the fifty.
Let me speak this once in my true person,
Not as Lippo,° Roland, or Andrea,
Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence:

ONE WORD MORE

Pray you, look on these my men and women,
Take and keep my fifty poems finished;
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also!
Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things.

XV

Not but that you know me! Lo, the moon's self!
Here in London, yonder late in Florence,
Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured.
Curving on a sky imbrued with color,
Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,
Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.
Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato,°
Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,
Perfect till the nightingales applauded.
Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,
Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs,
Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver,
Goes dispiritedly, glad to finish.

XVI

What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy?
Nay: for if that moon could love a mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),
All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos°),
She would turn a new side to her mortal,

Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—
Blank to Zoroaster° on his terrace,
Blind to Galileo° on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats°—him, even!
Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal—
When she turns round, comes again in heaven,
Opens out anew for worse or better!
Proves she like some portent of an iceberg
Swimming full upon the ship it founders,
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals?
Proves she as the paved work of a sapphire
Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?
Moses,° Aaron,° Nadab° and Abihu°
Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest,
Stand upon the paved work of a sapphire.
Like the bodied heaven in his clearness
Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved work,
When they ate and drank and saw God also!

XVII

What were seen? None knows, none ever shall know.
Only this is sure—the sight were other,
Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,
Dying now impoverished here in London.

God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her.°

XVIII

This I say of me, but think of you, Love!
This to you—yourself my moon of poets!
Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder,
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you!
There, in turn I stand with them and praise you—
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

XIX

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it,
Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom!

NOTES

The Pied Piper of Hamelin (Page 3)

The poem is based on an old myth found in many forms, all turning upon the attempt to cheat a magician out of his promised reward. See Brewer's *Reader's Handbook*, Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, Grimm's *Deutsche Sagen*, and the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. There are Persian and Chinese analogues.

The eldest son of William Macready, the actor, was confined to the house by illness, and Browning wrote this poem to amuse the boy and to give him a subject for illustrative drawings. Pupils with some knack at drawing may show how well it is adapted to fanciful or whimsical illustrations.

Line 1. **Hamelin.** A town in Hanover, Prussia.

89. **Cham,** or Khan. The title of the rulers of Tartary.

91. **Nizam.** The title of the sovereign of Hyderabad, the principal state of India.

158. **Claret, Moselle,** etc. Names of wines.

179. **Caliph.** The title given to the successor of Mohammed, as head of the Moslem state and defender of the faith.

Read *The Piper*, a play by Josephine Peabody and compare it with this poem.

Tray (Page 15)

The poem tells in detail an actual incident and was written as a protest against vivisection.

3. **Sir Olaf.** A conventional name in romances of mediæval chivalry.

6. A satire upon Byronism. Manfred and Childe Harold are heroes of this type.

Note the abruptness and vigor of the style. Where does it

seem effective? Where unduly harsh? Why does the poet welcome the third bard? What things does the poem satirize? Does it stir your feelings? How?

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP (PAGE 17)

The incident is real, except that the actual hero was a man, not a boy.

1. **Ratisbon** (German Regensburg): a city in Austria, stormed by Napoleon in 1809.

11. **Lannes**: Duke of Montebello, a general in Napoleon's army.

20. This sentence is incomplete. The idea is begun anew in line 23.

What sort of person is telling the incident? What shows the better side of Napoleon's character?

29. **flag-bird flap his vans . . .** The flag of Napoleon bore an eagle; **vans**, wings.

What two ideals are contrasted in Napoleon and the boy? By what means is sympathy turned from one to the other? Show how rapidity and vividness are given to the story.

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX (PAGE 19)

Browning thus explains the origin of the poem: "There is no sort of historical foundation about". *Good News from Ghent.* I wrote it under the bulwark of a vessel off the African coast, after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse 'York,' then in my stable at home".

5. **postern**: the rear gate of a castle or a fortified city.

14. **Lokeren.** Twelve miles from Ghent.

15. **Boom.** Sixteen miles from Lokeren.

16. **Düffeld.** Twelve miles from Boom.

17, 19, 31, etc. **Mecheln** (Fr. Malines), **Aershot, Hasselt**, etc. The reader may trace the direction and length of the ride in any large atlas. Minute examinations of the route are, however, of no special value.

Note the rapidity of narration and the galloping movement of the verse; the time of starting and the anxious attention to the *time* as the journey proceeds. How are we given a sense of the effort and distress of the horses? How do we see Roland gradually emerging as the hero? Where is the climax of the story? Note, especially, the power or beauty of lines 2, 5, 7, 15, 23, 25, 39, 40, 47, 51-53, 54-56.

HERVÉ RIEL (PAGE 23)

(Published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, 1871. Browning gave the £100 received for the poem to the fund for the relief of the people of Paris, who were starving after the siege of 1870.)

The cause of James II, who had been removed from the English throne in 1688 and succeeded by William and Mary, was taken up by the French. While on a visit to Croisie in 1867, Browning found the story among the town records, and, in his characteristic way, seized upon the obscure hero as the subject of a poem. The story is strictly historical except that Hervé Riel was retired on full pay for the rest of his life.

1. **the Hogue:** an anchorage at Cape la Hogue, on the northern coast of France.

5. **St. Malo on the Rance.** On the northern coast of France, in Brittany. See any large atlas.

43. **pressed:** forced to enter service in the navy.

44. **Croisickese.** A native of Croisic, in Brittany. Browning has used the legends of Croisic for poetic material in his *Gold Hair of Pornic* and in *The Two Poets of Croisic.*

46. **Malouins:** inhabitants of St. Malo.

53. **Solidor:** a fortified town on the Rance.

92. **rampined:** protected with ramparts.

135. **the Louvre:** the great palace and art gallery of Paris.

Note the suggestion of the sea and of eager hurry in the movement of the verse. Compare the directness of the opening with that of the preceding poem: What is the advantage of such a beginning? How much is told of the

hero? By what means is his heroism emphasized? How is Browning's departure from the legend a gain? Observe the abrupt energy of lines 39-40 the repetition in 79-80; the picture of Hervé Riel in stanzas viii and x.

MARTIN RELPH (PAGE 32)

5. **Methuseleh.** One of the patriarchs, related (*Genesis* v. 27) to have lived 969 years.

Was Martin Relph a coward or a murderer? Which does he think himself?

PHEIDIPPIDES (PAGE 44)

The story is from Book VI of Herodotus, told there in the third person.

The following version is from the translation of Herodotus by G. C. Macaulay (Macmillan): "First of all, while they were still in the city, the generals sent off to Sparta a herald, namely Pheidippides, an Athenian and for the rest a runner of long day courses and one who practiced this as his profession. With this man, as Pheidippides himself said and as he made report to the Athenians, Pan chanced to meet by mount Parthenion, which is above Tegea; and calling aloud the name of Pheidippides, Pan bade him report to the Athenians and ask for what reason they had no care of him, though he was well disposed to the Athenians and had been serviceable to them on many occasions before that time, and would be so also yet again. Believing that this tale was true, the Athenians, when their affairs had been now prosperously settled, established under the Acropolis a temple of Pan; and in consequence of this message they propitiate him with sacrifice offered every year and with a torch-race. However, at that time, the time namely when he said that Pan appeared to him, this Pheidippides having been sent by the generals was in Sparta on the next day after that on which he left the city of the Athenians, and when he had come to the magistrates he said: 'Lacedemonians, the Athenians make request of you to come to their help and not to allow a city most

anciently established among the Hellenes to fall into slavery by the means of Barbarians. . . .' He, as I say, reported to them that which he had been charged, and it pleased them well to come to help the Athenians; but it was impossible for them to do so at once, since they did not wish to break their law; for it was the ninth day of the month, and on the ninth day they said they would not go forth, nor until the circle of the moon should be full."

The final incident and the reward asked by the runner are Browning's addition. It is said that such an incident occurred after the victory of Miltiades at Marathon, though the name of the runner is unknown.

χαίρετε, νικῶμεν. Rejoice, we conquer.

4. **Zeus:** the chief of the Greek gods (Roman Jupiter), **Her of the ægis and spear.** These were the emblems of Athena (Roman Minerva), the goddess of wisdom and of warfare.

5. **ye of the bow and the buskin:** Apollo and Diana.

8. **Pan:** the god of nature, of the fields and their fruits.

9. **Archons:** rulers. **tettix,** the grasshopper, whose image symbolized old age and was worn by the senators of Athens. See the myth of Tithonus and Tennyson's poem of that name.

15. **two days, two nights did I burn . . .** The distance from Athens to Sparta is about 140 miles.

18. To bring earth and water to an invading enemy was a symbol of submission.

19. **Eretria.** A city on the island of Eubœa, twenty-nine miles north of Athens.

32. **Phoibos,** or Phœbus: Apollo, god of the sun and the arts. **Artemus** (Roman Diana): goddess of the moon and patroness of hunting.

33. **Olumpos:** Olympus, a mountain of Greece which was the abode of Zeus and the other gods.

52. **Parnes:** a mountain on the ridge between Attica and Bœotia, now called Ozia.

62. **Erebos:** the lower world, the place of night and the dead.

81-83. **Let this, foreshowing the place . . . fennel . . .** Though Pheidippides does not know it, this was a promise

that Pan would aid the Athenians at Marathon, the "Fennel-place."

89. **Miltiades** (?-489 B.C.): the Greek general who won the victory over the Persians at Marathon in 490 B.C.

106. **Akropolis:** the citadel of Athens, where stood the court of justice and the temple of the goddess Athene.

Compare the story in Herodotus with Browning's more spirited and poetic version. Observe how the strong patriotism, the Greek love of nature, and the Greek reverence for the gods are brought to the fore. What imagery in the poem is especially effective? What is the claim of Pheidippides—as Browning presents him—to memory as a hero? What ideals are most prominent in the poem?

IVÀN IVÀNOVITCH (PAGE 53)

19. **verst.** about two-thirds of a mile.

27. **Neva:** a river of Russia, which flows into the Gulf of Finland.

53. **Droug** (pronounced drook): The name of the horse. The word itself means *friend.*

137. **Stiòpka:** a pet name for Stephen.

138. From this point on, note how the woman tries to build up her defence against the judgment that will be directed against a mother who has sacrificed her children rather than herself.

279. **pope:** priest.

MY STAR (PAGE 81)

4. **angled spar.** The Iceland spar has the power of polarizing light and producing great richness and variety of color.

11. **Saturn:** the planet next beyond Jupiter here chosen, perhaps, for its changing aspects. See an encyclopædia or dictionary.

This dainty love lyric is said to have been written with Mrs. Browning in mind. It needs, however, no such narrow application for its interpretation. It is the simple declaration of the lover that the loved one reveals to him qualities of

soul not revealed to others. Observe the "order of lyric progress" in speaking first of nature, then of the feelings.

EVELYN HOPE (PAGE 82)

The lover denies the evanescence of human love. He implies that in some future time the love will reappar and be rewarded. Browning's optimism lays hold sometimes of the present, sometimes of the future, for the fulfilment of its hope. Especially strong is his "sense of the continuity of life." "There shall never be one lost good," he makes Abt Vogler say. The charm of this poem is more, perhaps, in its tenderness of tone and purity of atmosphere than in its doctrine of optimism.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS (PAGE 84)

This poem was written in Rome in the winter of 1853-1854. The scene is the Roman Campagna. The verse has a softness and a melody unusual in Browning. Compare its structure with that of Holmes's "The Last Leaf." Note the elements of pastoral peace and gentleness in the opening and in the coloring of the scene. What two scenes are brought into contrast? Note how the scenes alternate throughout the poem, and how each scene is gradually developed according to the ordinary laws of description. What ideals are thus compared? What does the poem mean?

CRISTINA (PAGE 90)

Maria Christina of Naples is the Cristina of the poem. She married Ferdinand VII, the King of Spain. Before her marriage she was noted as a coquette and more than one victim who had responded too openly to her flirtatious glances was said to have languished in prison. To Browning love is a truly sacred passion, and to trifle with love is indeed a sin.

MISCONCEPTIONS (PAGE 93)

11. **dalmatic**: a robe worn by mediæval kings on solemn

occasions, and still worn by deacons at the mass in the Roman Catholic Church.

The lyric order appears sharply developed here in the parallelism of the two stanzas. Point out this parallelism of idea. Does it fail at any point? Note the chivalrous absence of reproach by the lover. Observe the climax up to which each stanza leads, and the climax within the last line of each stanza.

NATURAL MAGIC (PAGE 94)

5. **Nautch:** an Indian dancing-girl, to whom Browning ascribes the skill of a magician.

The poem celebrates the transforming and life-giving power of affection. Note the abrupt and excited manner of utterance, and how the speaker begins in the midst of things. He has already told his story once, when the poem opens. Note also the parallelism of structure, as in "Misconceptions," the climax in each stanza, and the echo in the last line of each. Tell the story in the common order of prose narrative.

APPARITIONS (PAGE 95)

Study the development of the idea in the same manner as in "Misconceptions" and "Natural Magic." Note the felicity of imagery and diction.

A WALL (PAGE 96)

The clew to the meaning is to be sought in the last two stanzas. This is one of the best examples of Browning's "assertion of the soul in song."

CONFESSIONS (PAGE 97)

First construct the scene of the poem. What has the priest said? What is the sick man's answer? What evidence is there that his imagination is struggling to recall the old memory? What view of life does the priest offer, and he

reject? Does Browning indicate his preference for either view, or tell the story impartially?

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD (PAGE 98)

What key to the situation in the first line? Who are the speaker and the one addressed? What mood and feeling are in control? Comment upon the condensation of the thought and the movement of the verse.

A PRETTY WOMAN (PAGE 102)

25-27. Compare Emerson's lines in *The Rhodora*:—

> If eyes were made for seeing,
> Then beauty is its own excuse for being.

To what things is the Pretty Woman compared? Of what use is she? How is she to be judged?

YOUTH AND ART (PAGE 105)

8. **Gibson, John** (1790-1866): a famous sculptor.

12. **Grisi, Giulia** (1811-1869): a celebrated singer.

18. In allusion to the asceticism of the Hindoo religious devotees.

58. **bals-parés**: fancy-dress balls.

60. See *Royal Academy* in an encyclopedia.

The poem is half-humorous, half-serious. The speaker, in her imaginary conversation, gives her own history and that of the man she thinks she might have loved. The story is on the "Maud Muller" motive, but with less of sentimentality. The setting suggests the life of art students in Paris or in some Italian city. The poem is a plea for the freedom of the individuality of a soul against the restrictions imposed by conventional standards of value. Its touches of humor and of human nature and its summary of two lives in brief are admirably done. Its rhymes sometimes need the indulgence accorded to humorous writing.

A TALE (PAGE 108)

The source of the story is an epigram given in Mackail's

Select Epigrams from Greek Anthology. It is one of the happiest pieces of Browning's lighter work.

65. **Lotte**, or Charlotte: a character in Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther* said to be drawn from the heroine of one of Goethe's earlier love affairs.

Who are the speaker and the one addressed? Whom does the cicada of the tale symbolize? Whom the singer helped by the cicada? What application is made of the story? What serious meanings and feelings underlie the tone of raillery? What things mark the light and humorous tone of the speaker? Point out the harmony between style and theme.

CAVALIER TUNES (PAGE 112)

Note the swinging, martial movement, and the energetic spirit in these lyrics. For an account of the history of the period, see Green's *Short History of the English People*, Chapter VIII, and Macaulay's *History of England*, Chapter I. For an account of the qualities of the Cavaliers, see Macaulay's "Essay on Milton."

1. MARCHING ALONG

1. **Kentish Sir Byng.** The first of the family known to fame was George Byng, Viscount Torrington (1663-1733), who could not be the man meant here by Browning. What famous member of the family "stood for his king" during the World War?

2. **crop-headed.** In allusion to the close-cropped hair of the Puritans. Long wigs were the fashion among the Cavaliers; hence the Puritans were nicknamed "Roundheads."

7. **King Charles I. Pym**, John (1584-1643), leader of the Parliament in its actions against King Charles and the Royalist party.

14. **Hampden**, John (1594-1643): one of the leaders of Parliament known principally for his resistance to the illegal taxations of Charles I.

15. **Hazelrig**, Sir Arthur: one of the members of Parliament whom Charles tried to impeach. **Fiennes**, Nathaniel:

one of the leading members of Parliament. **young Harry:** son of Sir Henry Vane, and a member of the Puritan party.

16. **Rupert:** Prince of the Palatinate (1619-1682) and nephew of Charles I. He served in the King's army during the civil war.

23. **Nottingham.** "Charles I raised his standard here, in 1642, as the beginning of the civil war."—*Century Dictionary.*

II. GIVE A ROUSE

16. **Noll** was a contemptuous nickname for Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the Puritans.

MUCKLE-MOUTH MEG

1. **Laird . . . Lord.** The Scotch and English words for the same title.

3. **chiel:** a young fellow.

7. **callant:** lad; a fine fellow.

8. **Muckle-Mouth:** great or big-mouthed. **Meg:** contraction for Margaret.

13. **the hole:** a dungeon.

21. **parritch:** porridge.

31. **bubbly-jock:** turkey.

39. **Margaret Minnikin-Mou':** Margaret of the small mouth

HOME THOUGHTS FROM THE SEA (PAGE 120)

This poem is a companion piece to "Home Thoughts from Abroad." It is, however, distinctly inferior to it in clearness, vividness of feeling, and lyric sweetness.

1-2. **Cape Saint Vincent** and **Cadiz:** scenes of English naval victories over the Spanish.

3. **Trafalgar:** the scene of the famous victory of the English admiral, Nelson, over the French fleet in 1805.

4. **Gibraltar:** the famous rocky promontory at the entrance of the Mediterranean. It has been held as an English fort since 1704.

SUMMUM BONUM (PAGE 121)

This little poem, published in 1890, is one of the good examples of a love lyric written by an old man whose spirit is still youthful. There are some similar things by Tennyson, in "Gareth and Lynette," and elsewhere in his later publications.

Note here the somewhat exaggerated art of the poem in the alliterations and in the multiple comparisons.

SONGS FROM PIPPA PASSES (PAGE 122)

The drama of "Pippa Passes" is a succession of scenes, each representing some crisis of human life, into which breaks, with beneficent influence, a song of the girl Felippa, or "Pippa," on her holiday from the silk mills. She is unconscious of the influence she exerts. William Sharp says these songs "are as pathetically fresh and free as a thrush's song in a beleaguered city, and with the same unconsidered magic."

THE LOST LEADER (PAGE 126)

The desertion of the liberal cause by Wordsworth, Southey, and others is the germinal idea of this poem. But Browning always strenuously insisted that the resemblance went no further; that "The Lost Leader" is no true portrait of Wordsworth, though he became poet-laureate. "The Lost Leader" is a purely ideal conception, developed by the process of idealization from an individual who serves as a "lay figure."

13. **Shakespeare** was more of an aristocrat, surely, than a democrat. **Milton** had championed the cause of liberty in prose and poetry and had worked for it as Cromwell's Latin secretary.

14. **Burns, Shelley.** What poems can you cite of either poet to place him in this list?

Who is the speaker? What is the cause? Why does he not wish the "lost leader" to return? How does he judge him? What does he expect for his cause? What does he

mean by lines 29-30? lines 31-32? Point out the climax in the second stanza.

APPARENT FAILURE (PAGE 128)

3. **your Prince**: son of Napoleon III, born in March, 1856.

7. **The Congress** assembled to discuss Italy's unity and freedom. **Gortschakoff** represented Russia; **Count Cayour**, Italy; **Buol**, Austria. Austria had conquered Italy. See Browning's "The Italian in England."

12. **Petrarch's Vaucluse**: the fountain from which the **Sorgue** rises. The town of Vaucluse (Valclusa) was the home of the poet Petrarch (1304-1374).

14. **debt**: the obligation to visit a famous place.

39. **Tuileries**: the imperial palace in Paris.

43-44. **you've gained**, etc. What is meant? Death? Freedom?

46-47. In allusion to the game of *rouge-et-noir*. Criticize the taste shown here.

In what sense does the poet intend to "save" the building? Describe the scene that he recalls. What three types are the suicides? How does the poet know? Why does he deny the failure of their lives? Does he base his optimistic hope on reason or feeling? Note the climax in lines 55-57. State in your own words the meaning of the last six lines.

FEARS AND SCRUPLES (PAGE 130)

The problem of the religious doubter is here set forth by an analogy.

5. **letters**. The reference is of course to the Scriptures.

17. ff. In reference to sceptical criticism.

What are the "fears and scruples" held by the speaker? What proof does he desire to allay his doubts? Does he settle the doubt or put it aside? Where is his spirit of reverence best shown?

INSTANS TYRANNUS (PAGE 133)

Instans Tyrannus: the threatening tyrant. The phrase

is from Horace's *Odes*, Book III, iii, as is probably the idea of the poem. Gladstone translates the passage:

> The just man in his purpose strong,
> No madding crowd can turn to wrong.
> The forceful tyrant's brow and word
> . . . . . .
> His firm-set spirit cannot move.

There is novelty of conception in giving the situation from the tyrant's point of view. Compare also the seventh Ode of Horace in Book II.

44. **gravamen** (Latin): burden, difficulty, annoyance.

69. **Just** (as) **my vengeance** (was) **complete.** What conception do you get of the tyrant? What is his motive? What things aggravate his hatred? How does he seek to "extinguish the man"? Is he deterred by physical or moral fear? By what means is the poem given vigor and clearness? Note the dramatic effect in the last stanza.

THE PATRIOT (PAGE 136)

At what point in his career does the speaker give his story? What have been his motives? How was he at first treated? What indicates that the change is not in him but in the fickle mob? How does he view his downfall? In what thought lies his sense of triumph? How does his greatness of soul appear?

CLIVE (PAGE 137)

The famous Robert Clive was born, 1725, in Shropshire. He suffered greatly from low spirits, and twice attempted his life before he had attained manhood. His career in India is well known from Macaulay's Essay. He fought the battle of Plassy in 1757. He was impeached for various malfeasances, but acquitted. He killed himself in 1774.—*Note from Globe edition.*

l. 8. **Plassy.** See note above. Plassy is a village in Bengal, British India.

l. 11. **thrids**: threads (archaic).

l. 23. **writing on the wall.** See *Daniel* v.

l. 31. **poor as Job.** See *Job* i. **meek as Moses.** See *Numbers* xii.

l. 40. **Arcot:** town in Madras.

l. 91. **factor:** the agent in charge of a trading post.

l. 112. **Thyrsis . . . Chloe:** names for a pair of lovers.

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL (PAGE 155)

24. **"the voice of my delight."** That is, the boy's simple praises.

What quality did the praise of the Pope and of the angel lack? What is the meaning of the legend?

MEMORABILIA (PAGE 161)

In Browning's early youth, while he was under the influence of Byron and Pope, he found, at a bookstall, a stray copy of Shelley's "Dæmon of the World." From this time on, Shelley's poetry was his ideal. The term "moulted feather" has peculiar significance from the fact that this was a poem which Shelley afterwards rejected.

How is childlike wonder expressed in the first two stanzas? How is the difference between the speaker and his friend indicated? Why does the name of Shelley mean so much more to one than to the other? In the figure that follows, what do the moor and the eagle's feather stand for? Do you suppose the friend understands what the speaker is saying? Does the speaker greatly care to be understood by such a person?

PROSPICE (PAGE 162)

Written shortly after the death of Mrs. Browning. The title means "Look Forward."

Note the vividness of the imagery, the swiftness of the movement, the rise to the climax, the change in spirit after the climax, and the note of courage and hope that animates this poem. Compare it with Tennsyson's "Crossing the Bar." What difference in spirit between the two?

EPILOGUE TO "ASOLANDO" (PAGE 163)

Sharp's *Life of Browning* has the following passage: "Shortly before the great bell of San Marco struck ten, he turned and asked if any news had come concerning "Asolando," published that day. His son read him a telegram from the publishers, telling how great the demand was, and how favorable were the advance articles in the leading papers. The dying poet turned and muttered, 'How gratifying!' When the last toll of St. Mark's had left a deeper stillness than before, those by the bedside saw a yet profounder silence on the face of him whom they loved."

17. **the unseen:** the dead friend.

What claim does Browning make for himself? Do you find this spirit in any of his poetry which you have read? What is his conception of the life after death?

"DE GUSTIBUS—" (PAGE 164)

Image the scene in the first stanza. Why are the poppies known by their flutter, rather than their color? Note the rhyme effect and climax in lines 11-13. What qualities predominate in the first scene? How does the second scene differ from it? What are the characteristic objects in the second? Has it more or less of the romantic, or of grandeur? Compare the human element introduced in each scene. Note the effectiveness of the epithets *a-flutter, wind-grieved, baked, red-rusted, iron-spiked.* Show how the poem explains its title.

22. **cicala:** cicada.

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND (PAGE 166)

The setting of the story is Italy's struggle against Austria for her liberty, known as the Revolution of 1848.

8. **Charles:** Carlo Alberto, Prince of Carignano, of the house of Savoy.

19. **Metternich** (1773-1859): the Austrian diplomatist and the enemy of Italian liberty.

25. **Lombardy.** See an atlas.

76. **Tenebrae:** darkness. A religious service in the Roman Catholic Church, commemorating the crucifixion.

MY LAST DUCHESS (PAGE 172)

Ferrara still preserves the mediæval traditions and appearance in a marked degree. The Dukes of Ferrara were noted art patrons. Both Ariosto and Tasso were members of their household; but neither poet was fully appreciated by his master.

3. **Fra Pandolf:** an imaginary artist.

45-46. Professor Corson, in his *Introduction to Browning*, quotes an answer from the poet himself: "'Yes, I meant that the commands were that she should be put to death.' And then, after a pause, he added, with a characteristic dash of expression, as if the thought had just started in his mind, 'Or he might have had her shut up in a convent.'"

56. **Claus of Innsbruck:** an imaginary artist.

This poem is a fine example of Browning's skill in the use of dramatic monologue. (See Introduction.) The Duke is skilfully made to reveal his own character and motives, and those of the Duchess, and at the same time to indicate the actions of himself and his listener.

Construct in imagination the scene and the action of the poem. What has brought the Duke and the envoy together? What things indicate the Duke's pride? Was his jealousy due to pride or to affection? Does he prize the picture as a work of art or as a memory of the Duchess? What faults did he find in her? What character do these criticisms show her to have had? What did he wish her to be? Note the anticlimax in lines 25-28: what is the effect? What shows the Duke's difficulty in breaking his reserve on this matter? What motive has he for so doing? What action is indicated in 53-54? Where does the poet show skill in condensation, in character drawing, in vividness, in enlisting the reader's sympathy?

"The Flight of the Duchess" should be read as a development and variation of this theme.

THE GLOVE (PAGE 174)

This is an old French story of the time of Francis I. Other versions have been told by Schiller and Leigh Hunt.

Peter Ronsard (1524-1585) called "the prince of poets" by his contemporaries. He was first in diplomacy, but, becoming deaf, devoted himself to literature.

12. **Naso:** Publius Ovidius Naso (43 B.C.-17 A.D.), Roman poet, author of the *Metamorphoses*.

14. **Ixion:** a mortal who in Greek mythology, fell in love with Hera, queen of the gods. Hera sent a cloud in her shape to which the deluded Ixion made love.

35. **scarab:** a beetle.

45. **Clement Marot** (1496-1544): a distinguished French poet.

50. ***Illum Juda Lionem de Tribu: That lion of the tribe of Juda.*** The lion was the symbol of the kingdom of Juda. See *Revelation* v, 5.

190. ***Venienti occurrite morbo! Meet trouble as it comes!***

191. **Theorbo:** a musical instrument like a large lute.

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAXED'S (PAGE 181)

Ruskin gives this poem high praise: "Robert Browning is unerring in every sentence he writes of the Middle Ages. . . . I know no other piece of modern English prose or poetry in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit—its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of luxury, and of good Latin. It is nearly all that I have said of the central Renaissance, in thirty pages of *The Stones of Venice*, put into as many lines; Browning's also being the antecedent work."

It is not, however, for its historical accuracy that a poem is mainly to be judged. The full and imaginative portrayal of a type, belonging not to one age only, but to human nature, is a greater achievement. And this achievement Browning has undoubtedly performed.

5. **Old Gandolf:** evidently one of the Bishop's colleagues in holy orders, and like him in holiness.

29. **peach blossom marble:** an Italian marble used in decoration.

31. **onion-stone:** *cippolino, cipoline,* an Italian marble, white, with pale-green shadings. The word is derived from *cippola,* an onion, and Browning translates the term literally.

41. **olive-frail:** a crate, made of rushes, for packing olives.

42. **lapis lazuli:** a very beautiful and valuable blue stone.

46. **Frascati:** a town near Rome, celebrated for its villas.

56-62. Such mixture of Christian and Pagan elements was a common feature in Renaissance art and literature.

58. **tripod.** The triple-footed seat from which the priestesses of Apollo at Delphi delivered the oracles. **thyrsus.** A staff entwined with ivy and vines and borne in the Bacchic processions.

77. **Tully.** Marcus Tullius Cicero, the Roman orator, statesman, and philosopher.

79. **Ulpian.** A celebrated Roman jurist of the third century.

99. **elucescebat.** Late Latin, from *elucesco.* The classical or Ciceronian form would be *elucebat,* from *eluceo.* Here appears the Bishop's love of good Latin.

108. **Term:** a pillar, widening toward the top, upon which is placed a figure or a bust.

Who are grouped about the Bishop's bed? What does he desire? Why? What tastes does he show? Point out evidences of his crimes, his suspicion, his sensual ideals, his artistic tastes, his canting hypocrisy, his confusion of the material and the immaterial, and the persistency of his passions and feelings. Note the subtlety with which these things are suggested, especially lines 18-19, 29-30, 33-44, 50-52, 59-62, 80-84, 122-125.

THE LABORATORY (PAGE 187)

This is a little masterpiece in its vividness and condensa-

tion. The passions of hate and jealousy have seldom been so well portrayed. The time and place are probably France and the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Berdoe has called attention in his *Browning Cyclopædia* to the number of fine antitheses in the second stanza.

Who are present in the scene? Who are to be the victims? Account for the speaker's *patience* in stanza iii. Point out the things that show the intensity of her hate. Does she display any other feeling than hate and jealousy?

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD (PAGE 189)

Where is the speaker? What scene is in his imagination? Trace the growth in his mind of this scene: in color effects, in the kind of life introduced, in the intensity of the feeling, in the vividness with which he enters into it. What is the charm in lines 12-14?

UP AT A VILLA — DOWN IN THE CITY (PAGE 190)

4. **Bacchus**: the Roman god of wine, frequently invoked in the garnishment of Latin and Italian speech.

42. **Pulcinello** is the Italian for clown or puppet and the prototype of the English Punch.

48. **Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch**: Italy's first three great authors. See a biographical dictionary or encyclopædia for their dates and their works.

St. Jerome (340-420): one of the fathers of the Roman Church. He prepared the Latin translation of the *Bible* known as the *Vulgate*.

49. **the skirts of St. Paul has reached**: has done almost as well as St. Paul.

51. **Our Lady**: the image of the Virgin Mary. Observe our hero's taste and his religious solemnity.

52. **seven swords**, etc. Representing the seven "legendary sorrows" of the Virgin. See Berdoe's *Browning Cyclopædia*, or Brewer's *Reader's Handbook*, or *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* for the list.

"Up at a Villa" is one of the best humorous poems in the language. The hero's desires and sorrows are so *naïve*, his

tastes so gravely held, that he provokes our sympathy as well as our laughter. One of the charms of the poem is the way in which he is made to testify, in spite of himself, to the beauties of the country (as in lines 7-9, 19-20, 22-25, 32-33, 36) and to the monotony or clanging emptiness of the city (as in lines 12-14, 38-54). Compare lines 8 and 32 with the picture in "De Gustibus."

A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S (PAGE 195)

Toccata. See an unabridged dictionary.

1. **Galuppi:** Baldassare Galuppi (1706-1785), Venice, a celebrated musician and prolific composer.

6. **St. Mark's:** the famous cathedral of Venice. **Doges . . . rings.** The Doge was chief magistrate of Venice. The annual ceremony of "wedding the Adriatic" by casting into it a gold ring was instituted in 1174, in commemoration of the victory of the Venetian fleet over Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany.

8. **Shylock's bridge.** By the Rialto. A house by the bridge said to be Shylock's is still pointed out to visitors.

18. **clavichord:** an instrument of the type of the piano.

19 ff. **thirds, sixths,** etc. For the musical terms see an unabridged dictionary or a musical dictionary.

30. Compare the lines in Fitzgerald's translation of the "Rubaiyat":

> For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
> That from his vintage rolling Time hath prest,
> Have drunk their cup a round or two before,
> And one by one crept silently to rest.

This is the characteristic note of poetic melancholy found again and again from Virgil to Tennyson.

37-39. Is the ironical tone of these lines in harmony with the spirit of the rest of the poem?

What does Galuppi's music mean to Browning? What does it recall of the life in Venice? Is the lightness of tone in the music itself or in the poet's idea of Venice? What emotions are aroused? What causes the poet's sadness? Is the verse musical? Does it suit the ideas it conveys?

GOLD HAIR (PAGE 201)

16. **flix and floss**: down and fluff.

73. **lurch**: hidden place.

86. ***O cor Humanum, pectora cæca:*** O hidden thoughts of the human heart! The literal translation is O human heart, hidden thoughts.

90. **Louis d'or**: an old French gold coin worth between four and five dollars.

128-130. ***thirty pieces*** . . . **Potter's Field**: See *Matthew* xxvii.

145. **Colenso's words.** John William Colenso (1814-1883) was an English divine whose advanced critical writings on the Old Testament aroused wide discussion and much antagonism.

ABT VOGLER (PAGE 207)

George Joseph Vogler, known also as Abbé (or Abt) Vogler (1749-1816), was a German musician. He composed operas and other musical pieces, became famous as an organist, and invented an organ with pedals and several keyboards. Browning seems to have in mind the complex musical harmonies of which the instrument was capable. See lines 10, 13, 52, 55, and 84 of the poem. See also the *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

3. **Solomon.** Legends about Solomon and his power over the spirits of earth and air are common in Jewish and Arabic literature.

9 ff. **building.** The idea of building by music is an old one. See the classical story of Amphion and the walls of Thebes, Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," and Tennyson's "Gareth and Lynette," lines 272-274.

23. The reference is to St. Peter's in Rome.

The musician's imagination takes fire from his playing, and his music seems like a glorious palace which he is building. The notes are conceived as spirits doing his bidding (stanzas i-iii). As he proceeds the images change: heaven and earth seem to unite with him in his creative

activity; light flashes forth; and heaven and earth draw nearer together. Now he sees the past, the beginnings of things, and the future; even the dead are back again in his presence. His imagination has annulled time and space. As he thinks of his art, it seems more glorious to him than painting and poetry: these work by laws that can be explained and followed, while music is a direct expression of the will, an act of higher creative power.

When the music ends he cannot be consoled by the thought that as good music will come again. So he turns to the one unchanging thing, "the ineffable Name." Thus he gains confidence to say, "there shall never be one lost good." All failure and all evil are but a prelude to the good that shall in the end prevail. So he returns in hope and patience to the C major, the common chord of life.

"Abt Vogler" is famous, not only for its confident optimism, but as an example of Browning's power of annexing a new domain—that of music—to poetry.

Where does the musician cease to speak of Solomon's building and begin to describe his own? Note, in stanza ii, how he speaks first of the *keys*, and afterwards has in mind the *notes;* how he speaks of the bass notes as the foundation, and the upper notes as the structure. Where is the climax of his creative vision? What does he mean in line 40? Is he right in saying music is less subject to laws than poetry and painting? Why is he sad when his music ceases? Why does he turn to God for consolation? Follow carefully the argument in stanza ix. Is it convincing? What analogy does he find between music, and good and evil?

RABBI BEN EZRA (PAGE 214)

Abraham Ben Meir Ben Ezra, into whose mouth Browning puts the reflections in this poem, was born in Toledo, Spain, in 1090 and died about 1168. He was distinguished as philosopher, astronomer, physician, and poet. The ideas of the poem are drawn largely from the writings of Rabbi Ben Ezra. See Berdoe's *Browning Cyclopædia.*

1. **Grow old along with me.** Come and let us talk of old age.

7-15. **not that.** Connect "not that" of lines 7 and 10 and the "not for," etc. of 13 with "Do I remonstrate" in line 15.

29. **hold of:** are like, share the nature of.

39-41. Compare "A Grammarian's Funeral."

117. **be named:** that is, known or distinguished.

124. **Was I (whom) the world arraigned.** Browning frequently omits the relative.

139-144. Compare lines 39-41. Note here and elsewhere in this poem the frequent repetition and variation of the same idea.

151. **Potter's wheel.** The figure of the potter's wheel is frequent in Oriental literature. See *Isaiah* lxiv: 8, and *Jeremiah* xviii: 2-6; see also Fitzgerald's "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," stanzas xxxvii. xxxviii, lxxxii-xc.

169-171. In the period of youth.

172-174. In old age.

What cares agitate youth? Why is it better so? Wherein does man partake of the nature of God? What plea is made for the "value and significance of flesh"? Show how Browning denies the doctrine of asceticism. What is meant by "the whole design," line 56? Why does Rabbi Ben Ezra pause at the threshold of old age? What has youth achieved? What advantage has old age? What are its pleasures? Its employments? Explain the figure in lines 91-95. By what are the man and his work to be judged? Compare the use of the figure of the potter's wheel with that in the *Old Testament*. What has Browning added? Point out the element of optimism in the poem. How does its view of old age differ from the pagan view? See Browning's "Cleon."

"ALKESTIS" (PAGE 223)

1. **Apollon:** Phœbus Apollo, the god of archery and of the sun, had been sentenced by Zeus to spend a year in the service of a mortal. King Admetos took him into his service and treated him kindly. In return for this, Apollo promised that if Admetos should, when about to die, persuade some one to die in his place, he might live.

52. **Zeus:** The father of the gods and king of heaven.

191. **Straying among the flowers in Sicily.** The reference is to Persephone, the daughter of Ceres, goddess of the harvest, who, when gathering flowers in Sicily, was carried off by Pluto, god of the underworld. She was carried to Hades, where she ruled with Pluto over the realms of the dead.

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL (PAGE 232)

The Grammarian is a type of the early scholars who gave to Europe the treasures of Greek thought by translating the manuscripts recovered after the fall of Constantinople. The time is therefore the Renaissance, the latter part of the fifteenth century, and the place probably Italy. The Grammarian was a scholar and thinker, not a mere student of grammar in the modern sense.

23. **Our low life.** Lacking the learning and high endeavor of their master.

45-46. **the world bent on escaping.** That is, the world of the past.

48. **shaping,** their mind and character.

97-98. Compare with lines 65-72, 77-84, and 103-104.

129-131. The Greek particles ὅτι, οὖν, and δέ.

Describe the scene and action of the poem. Note the march-like and irregular movement of the verse: does it fit the theme? Why do they carry the Grammarian up from the plain? What was his work? What was his aim? What is the value of such work (1) in presenting an ideal of life, (2) in the history of culture? What circumstances in his life enhance his praise? Did he make any mistake? Does Browning think so? How does Browning defend him? What imagery in the poem seems especially effective? Are you reminded of anything in "Rabbi Ben Ezra"? Criticize the rhymes and metre.

ANDREA DEL SARTO (PAGE 238)

An Italian painter of the Florentine school; born 1487, died 1531. His merits and defects as an artist are given in the poem. The crime to which he is here made to refer

was the use, for building himself a house, of the money intrusted to him by the French king for the purchase of works of art. For an account of his life and work see the articles in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and Vasari's *Lives of the Painters.*

15. **Fiesole** (pronounced Fe-ā-so-lĕ): a small Italian town near Florence.

119. **Rafael:** the great painter Raphael (1483-1520).

130. **Agnolo:** Michael Angelo (1475-1564), one of Italy's greatest men: famous as sculptor, painter, architect, and poet.

150. **Fontainebleau:** a town southeast of Paris, formerly the residence of French kings and still famous for its Renaissance architecture and for the landscapes around it.

241. **scudi.** The *scudo* is an Italian silver coin worth about one dollar.

263. **Leonard.** Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), another of Italy's great men: artist, poet, musician, and scientist.

Construct the scene and action of the poem. How does the coloring harmonize with the artist's mood? Why is he weary? How does he think of his art: what merit has it? What does it lack? How does he explain this lack? What clew to it does his life afford? Is his art soulless because he has done wrong? Or do the lack of soul in his painting, and the wrongdoing, and the infatuation with Lucrezia's beauty all arise from the same thing—the man's own nature? Does he appeal to your sympathy, or provoke your condemnation? Does he blame himself, or another, or circumstances?

What idea have you of Lucrezia? What does she think of Andrea? Of his art? What things does he desire of her?

What problems of life are here presented? Which is principal: the relation of man and woman, the need of *soul* for great work, or the interrelation between character and achievement? Or is there something else for which the poem stands?

Can you cite any lines that embody the main idea of the poem? Does anything in it remind you of "A Grammarian's Funeral" or of "Rabbi Ben Ezra"?

CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS (PAGE 251)

Setebos was the god of Caliban's mother, the witch Sycorax, on Prospero's island in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

Read the play, observing especially all that is said by or about Caliban. Observe that Browning makes Caliban usually speak of himself in the third person, and prefixes an apostrophe to the initial verb, as in the first line.

How is Caliban's savage nature indicated in the opening scene? What things does he think Setebos has made? From what motives? What limit to the power of Setebos? Why does Caliban imagine these limits? How does Setebos govern? Out of what materials does Caliban build his conceptions of his deity? Why does he fear him? How does he propitiate him? Why is he terrified at the end? Compare this passage with the latter part of *Job*. What, in general, is the meaning of the poem? Is the principal effect serious, humorous, or satirical?

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME" (PAGE 265)

When Browning was asked by the Rev. Dr. J. W. Chadwick whether the central idea of this poem was constancy to an ideal,—"He that endureth to the end shall be saved,"—he answered, "Yes, just about that."

4-5. **to afford suppression of**: to suppress.

48. **its estray**: Childe Roland himself.

66. **my prisoners.** Those who had met their death on the plain? Or its imprisoned vegetation?

68. **bents**: a kind of grass.

70. **as**: as if.

91. **Not it!** Memory did not give hope and solace.

106. **howlet**: a small owl.

114. **bespate**: spattered.

133. **cirque**: a circle or enclosure.

143. **Tophet**: hell.

160. **Apollyon**: the Devil.

Note the hero's mood of doubt and despair. At what point in his quest do we see him? What does he do after meeting the cripple? How does the landscape seem as he

goes on? What *moral* quality does it seem to have? See lines 56-75. What new elements are introduced to add to the horror of the scene? What memories come to him of the failures of his friends? Was their disgrace in physical or moral failure? How does he come to find the tower? Why does Browning represent it as a "dark tower"? Does his courage fail at the end of his quest? Or does he win the victory in finding the tower and blowing the challenge?

An Epistle (Page 277)

The Arabs were among the earliest in the cultivation of mathematical and medical science. This fact, together with their monotheism, makes Karshish an appropriate character for the experience of the poem.

1-14. An ancient and Oriental idea of the soul and its relation to the body.

15. **Sage:** Abib, to whom the letter is sent.

17. **snake-stone:** a stone used to cure snake bites.

19. **charms.** Note here and elsewhere the mixture of science and superstition.

21-33. **My journeyings . . . a spy.** The poet has given local color to the journey.

28. **Vespasian** was appointed general-in-chief against the insurgent Jews in 67 A.D. and began the great siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The date of the poem and the length of time since Lazarus' return to life may thus be estimated.

37-38. Note the vividness gained by making Karshish keep the physician's point of view.

44. **falling-sickness . . . cure.** Epilepsy. Karshish is already admitting into his letter the story of Lazarus.

48. Not only spiders but many other animals or parts of animals were formerly used as medicines.

64-65. Karshish, still half ashamed of his interest in the marvelous story he has to tell, first gives this as a pretext and then in the next lines confesses.

171 ff. Belief in magic survived in some degree among the educated until a century or two ago.

177. **Greek-fire:** a violently inflammable substance, supposed to have been a compound of naphtha, sulphur,

and nitre, which was hurled against the enemy in battle. As it was first used in 673, in the siege of Constantinople, Browning is guilty of an unimportant anachronism.

252-255. A good touch, to make the earthquake mean to Karshish an omen of the gravest event within his ken.

304-311. This comes to Karshish as an afterthought, a corollary to the idea in the body of the poem.

How is the general style of the verse letter maintained? What is Karshish's mission in Judea? How does he show his devotion to his art? Point out instances of local color. Are they in harmony with the main current of the poem, or do they detract from the interest in the story? Why does Karshish work up to his story so diffidently? Why has the incident taken such hold upon him? What do you conceive to be his character and worth as a man?

What of Lazarus? What change has been wrought in him? Is he in any way unfitted for this life? To what does Karshish compare him, with his sudden wealth of insight behind the veil of the next world? Which of the two men is better fitted for the condition in which he is placed? What religious significance does the story of Lazarus come to have to Karshish? What parallel ideas do you find in "Rabbi Ben Ezra" and in this poem? Compare George Eliot's story, "The Lifted Veil."

SAUL (PAGE 289)

This is generally regarded as one of Browning's greatest poems. Even his detractors concede to it beauty of form, fervor of feeling, and richness of imagery. The incident upon which it is based is found in *I Samuel* xvi. Saul is in the depths of mental eclipse, and David has been summoned to cure him by music. The young shepherd sings to him first the songs that appeal to the gentle animals; then the songs that men use in their human relationships—songs of labor, of the wedding-feast, of the burial-service, of worship; then he sings the joy of physical life, ending in an appeal to the ambition of King Saul. Saul is roused but not yet brought to *will* to live. So David sings anew of the life of the spirit, the spirit of Saul living for his peo-

ple. Then a touch of tenderness from the king flashes into David a prophetic insight: If he, the imperfect, would do so much for love of Saul, what would God, the all-perfect, do for men? And so he reaches the conception of the Christ, the incarnation.

The poem is full of echoes of the *Old Testament*, fused with the spirit of modern Christianity and modern thinking. It is touched here and there with bits of beauty from Oriental landscape. The long, even swell of the lines carries one along with no sense of the roughness so common in Browning's verse. Rising by steady degrees to the climax, we feel, like David, some sense of the "terrible glory," some sense of the unseen presences that hovered around him as he made his way home in the night.

How It Strikes a Contemporary (Page 315)

Although the faculty of observation is essential to a poet as well as to a spy, the world will more quickly think one is a spy than a poet. Here the neighbors impute all the mysteries of the town to this mysterious influence, and it is only at his death that they realize how mistaken they have been.

3. **Valladolid**: a province in northern Spain.

16. **scrutinizing hat.** Note how even the man's garments seem to partake of the character they impute to the man.

28. **fly-leaf ballads**: ballads scribbled by the authors on pieces of paper like the fly-leaves of books.

90. **Corregidor**: a magistrate, usually the chief one in a Spanish town.

115. **Prado**: a fashionable promenade or boulevard in Madrid, Spain. The name has been applied likewise to promenades elsewhere.

One Word More (Page 320)

"One Word More" was appended to Browning's volume *Men and Women* (1855), by way of dedication of the book to his wife. It is characteristic of its author in its

reality of feeling, in its seeking an unusual point of view, in its parenthetic and allusive style, and its occasional high felicity of expression. Those who feel overpowered by Browning's vigor and profundity of thought might stop here to note the exquisite inconsistency between the examples cited and the thing thus illustrated. The painter turning poet, the poet turning painter, the moon turning her unseen face to a mortal lover: these are compared to Browning the poet—writing another poem. The only difference in his art is that the poet here speaks for himself in the first person, and not, as usual, dramatically in the third person. The idea of the poem may be found, stripped of digression and fanciful comparisons, in the eighth, twelfth, fourteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth stanzas. Something of the same idea appears in "My Star."

5. **Rafael:** More commonly spelled Raphael. Born in Italy in 1483, died in 1520; generally regarded as the greatest of painters. The *Sistine Madonna*, at Dresden, is considered his greatest work. See lines 21-24.

Only four of his sonnets exist. A translation of these is given in Cooke's *Guide Book to Browning*. There is no authentic record of such a "century of sonnets" having ever existed.

10. Tradition is dim and uncertain as to the identity of this love of Raphael's.

27. **Guido Reni** (1575-1642): A celebrated Italian painter. Berdoe says that the volume owned by Guido Reni was a collection of a hundred drawings by Raphael.

32-33. **Dante** (1265-1321): The greatest of Italian poets. His *Divina Commedia*, consisting of the "Inferno," "Purgatorio," and "Paridiso," is his most famous work. His romantic passion for Beatrice (pronounced Bā-ȧ-trē che) is referred to in his *Divina Commedia* and is recounted in his *Vita Nuova*.

37-43. In allusion to the fact that Dante freely consigned his enemies, political and personal, living or dead, to appropriate places in his "Inferno" and "Purgatorio."

45-48. This interruption of his work is described in the thirty-fifth section of the *Vita Nuova*. The hostile nature of the visit seems to be of Browning's invention.—COOKE.

57. **Bice.** Beatrice.

74 ff. In allusion to Moses smiting the rock and bringing forth water. See *Exodus* xvii.

95. **Egypt's flesh-pots.** See *Exodus* xvi.

97. **Sinai's cloven brilliance.** See *Exodus* xix: 16-25.

101. **Jethro's daughter:** Zipporah. See *Exodus* ii and xviii.

136. **Cleon.** See the poem of that name. **Norbert.** See "In a Balcony."

138. **Lippo.** See "Fra Lippo Lippi."

150. **Samminiato:** San Miniato, a church in Florence.

160. **Mythos.** In reference to the myths of Endymion, the mortal with whom the goddess Diana (the moon) fell in love. See a classical dictionary and Keats's poem "Endymion."

163. **Zoroaster:** the founder of the Persian religion. Reference is here made to his observations of the heavenly bodies while meditating on religious things.

164. **Galileo** (1564-1642). The great Italian physicist and astronomer.

165. **Keats.** See note on line 160.

174. **Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu.** See *Exodus* xxiv.

186. Compare the idea in "My Star."

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